

MOVING TOWARD SOCIAL JUSTICE IN SPORT: A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY  
OF SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTIVISTS IN SPORT AND THE FACTORS THAT SHAPE  
THEM

A Dissertation

by

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## ABSTRACT

There are many different types of injustices in society, and there is no exception for the sport field. Injustices have a negative impact on many aspects of sport. This has resulted in many researchers and former and current athletes realizing that social change effort within their field of interest is necessary. Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation was to describe the psychological processes associated with individuals' interest in and commitment to social justice and why people get involved in social justice advocacy.

In this study, I used purposeful sampling, interviewing 11 social justice activists (current and former) in the field of sport or scholars studying the sport industry. The participants were asked what factors have influenced their social justice advocacy and why they got interested in social justice endeavors. First, participants offered their definitions of social justice advocacy, two major themes emerged, the Social Conscience and the Champions of a Cause. Next, the first research question asked of the participants was regarding how they learned about the injustice, which inspired them to become activists in the first place. Three clear themes were identified, direct experience, indirect experience, and indirect contact. In addition, the second research question focused on exploring how activists got involved in social justice advocacy. Three factors were identified, including increased awareness, atypical experience, and emotional responses. Moreover, research question 3 focused on what activities participants are engaged. Three major themes were emerged, raising awareness and changing attitudes, engaging in activity, and encouraging others. Finally, the last research question focused on how activists' personalities play a role in their activism. In drawing from the big five

personality, I identified extraversion, empathetic, and conscientiousness as influential personality traits.

In conclusion, I provided a number of practical implications. Especially, participants were influenced by the hardship experienced by others. Therefore, it is possible that exposing students, athletes, or others within your sphere of influence to the impact injustices have to those who live them on a daily basis could provide them with the direct or indirect contact with injustice needed to motivate them to learn more about the issues and encourage them to become involved in change.

## DEDICATION

To my family and to myself.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Billie Jean King was the world's greatest female tennis player of her time winning twelve titles in major matches between 1963 and 1975. She founded the Women's Tennis Association and was famous because of her activism both on and off the court. While in her prime, Ms. King became a staunch supporter of equal prizes being awarded for male and female athletes. Responding to Bobby Riggs' statement that Women's Tennis was so inferior to Men's that even a 55-year old retired player like himself could be the top seeded women athletes, King competed in what became known as 'The Battle of the Sexes' in 1973. She easily won the match. King was quoted as saying that "I thought it would set us women back 50 years if I didn't win that match. It would ruin the women's tennis tour and affect all women's self-esteem." The London Times described the match as 'the volley heard round the world.' Ms. King then said pointed out that she earned \$15,000 less than the winning male athlete at the US Open. She said that she would not play again unless that inequality was rectified. That same year, the USA became the first country to offer equal prize money to women athletes (Higdon, 2013).

Ms. King has been called a pioneer and earned a place on Life magazine's list of 100 Most Important People of the 20th Century. Like Billie Jean King, there are many people around the world who are not allowed to reach their full potential or compensated fairly, not based on their of ability, but rather because they are discriminated against. The discrimination takes many forms including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, economic status, or religious affiliation. These victims of discrimination are often underrepresented in a society that finds a way to justify its



inexcusable actions. The injustices build and strengthen as time goes by, perpetuating the cycle of discrimination, which may even build into persecution.

In modern society, individuals continue to encounter numerous social injustices on the personal, group, institutional, and societal levels (Rothenberg, 2007). This may be why many people desire that more emphasis to be placed on social justice (Pitkin, 1981). As a result, over the past several decades, scholars from various fields including economics, education, law, philosophy, psychology, social work, and sociology have given increased attention to social justice (Cohen, 1986; Miller et al., 2009). Moreover, as globalization has dramatically impacted society, people now need to socialize, execute their work and live with the diverse individuals that are encountered daily. It is therefore not surprising that many scholars and practitioners have recognized that there is an immediate need to promote diversity and social justice, focusing primarily on equity and social change (Sleeter, 1996).

There are many different types of injustices in this society, and there is no exception for the sport field. In fact, mainstream sport, as it is currently structured, reflects and reinforces various hegemonies of oppression and inequality such as racial, gender, sexual orientation, and social class prejudices (Eitzen & Sage, 2009). Those inequalities and prejudices have negative effects on many aspects of sport. For example, Faccenda, Pantaleon, and Reynes (2009) found that when soccer players were treated unjustly during the training session, they adopted more aggressive behavior and it negatively influencing their performance. Unjust treatment may not be blatant and can occur in subtle ways. However, there are numerous examples showing a number of injustices in sport contexts.

As another example, racial minorities still encounter various types of injustices. Although negative injustices based on one's race are often subtly conveyed as the society requires, racial minority athletes have expressed that they experienced some discrimination based on their race (Hylton, 2009; Singer, 2005). For instance, in the field of sports, racial minority coaches' annual salary is less than Whites coaches (Kahn, 2006). Moreover, many athletes have expressed they experienced some discriminatory reaction by fans, co-workers, and coaches (Singer, 2005). In 2014, the owner of the Los Angeles Clippers made headlines with his racist remarks. The NBA had apparently put up with his behavior for years despite numerous lawsuits and charges of discrimination. As a result, the owner was paid \$2.5 million and received a lifetime ban from the NBA (Goyette, 2014).

Moreover, females in sport have faced many more injustices than males (Schmitt, Ellemers, Branscombe, 2003; Spoor & Schmitt, 2011). For example, female tennis players are paid less than male players in professional tennis (Flake, Dufur, & Moore, 2012). In addition, the number of female coaches is comparatively smaller than males within both professional and collegiate sports (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014).

People who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) also face social injustices. Recently, a California high school varsity football coach, Burke Wallace, found himself without a job after casually mentioning that he was married to a man (Thomas, 2013). The same situation was faced by Mark Zmuda a few months later when the Seattle area swim coach was fired for being in a same sex relationship. The Seattle Times reported that Zmuda was given the choice to "get a divorce or be fired" (Turnbull, 2014). There are many LGBT individuals who are highly qualified for coaching positions

but are weeded out in the application process. For example, Cunningham, Sartore, and McCullough (2010) found that individuals or committees reviewing job applications and interviewing applicants gave low scores to LGB job candidates because they were seen as lacking moral fiber, meaning that they were deemed to possess less morality, low ethics and were generally rated as untrustworthy.

Also, there are pervasive social injustices based on one's social status. In the past, there were plenty of free venues where children could play and practice sports according to Darryl Hill, the first African American to participate in the Atlantic Coast Conference Football League. In an interview with the Pacific Standard, Hill pointed out that there are no more "sandlot playing fields" where poorer children can go and play for free (Greenya, 2013). In addition, according to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association, the rate of sports participation has a direct association with family income. About 25 percent of the population has household income under \$25,000; however, only 15 percent of sports participants are in that group and only 11 percent of soccer participants households (Holland, 2014).

This pattern of inequality has resulted in many researchers and athletes realizing that social change effort within their field of interest is necessary. A number of athletes have tried to use their positions of fame and popularity to encourage fans to get involved in social justice activism. The methods they employ may be as simple as raising awareness by mentioning the problem and asking fans to become involved. Sometimes the athletes become personally involved themselves. For example, Notah Begay, a member of the Navajo Nation and the only full-blooded Native American ever to play on the PGA tour, became the founder of the Notah Begay III Foundation. Within his

foundation, Begay developed many programs using golf and soccer which were designed to help reduce childhood obesity and Type II diabetes in order to improve the health of Native American children (Harwood, 2014). His efforts encouraged many others to get involved in social justice activities. Another example is Hudson Taylor who is a three-time NCAA Division I All-American wrestler and a coach at Columbia University. Taylor is an advocate of LGBT who is equality attempting to eliminate homophobia in sports. He is the founder of an organization called Athlete Ally and encourages heterosexual athletes to become involved as ambassadors working towards that goal (Klemko, 2013).

Athletes are not the only people working towards social change in sport. There are some scholars deeply committed to activism in the sport field. For example, Richard Lapchick, author and scholar, has become recognized as a pioneer for racial equality and a human rights activist. He has produced numerous articles dealing with social justice and human rights issues in athletic departments, professional teams and leagues. Lapchick showed further commitment to these causes by providing diversity management training to sport organizations (Araton, 2011).

These social justice advocates have influenced our society and changed social injustices. Therefore, it is crucial to encourage more people to commit to social change and participate into social justice activism. However, the factors that influence one's attitude toward social justice advocacy have not been clearly examined. Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation is to describe the psychological processes associated with individuals' interest in and commitment to social justice and why people get involved in social justice advocacy.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Social justice has long ago taken root in many fields (Apple, 1996). But even though the concept of social justice has stretched across time and taken on many forms, it is still a relatively new concern in the field of sport management. Social justice is a concept that can trace its origins back to philosophical discourse but gained a popular following and has become widely used in both social science and among the average citizen, often without being clearly defined. Not long ago, Miller (1999) offered a general definition of social justice as a concept, which could be broken into three parts. These three components are a state of affairs in which first, the benefits and burdens in society are dispersed in accordance with some allocation principle or set of principles; second, procedures, norms, and rules that govern political and other forms of decision making preserve the basic rights, freedoms, and entitlements of individuals and groups; and third, human beings and perhaps other species are treated with dignity and respect not only by authorities but also by others including the average citizen. In fact, there is a widely shared belief that societies should be constructed in ways that reflect what is just, and social theorists have devoted a considerable amount of energy in attempt to define exactly what 'just' is. (Miller, 1999)

In this dissertation, I am interested in describing the psychological processes associated with individuals' interest in and commitment to social justice and why people get involved in social justice advocacy. In order to explain this, I adopted a nonlinear developmental model of social justice engagement (Moeschberger, Ordonez, Shankar, & Raney, 2006). Moeschberger and his colleagues identified movement through four elements: (a) contact with a reality of oppression where oppression refers to one group

abusing power held over another group; (b) increasing awareness, formulating an efficacy to create change, and understanding the role of self in relation to this change; (c) developing a deeper understanding of the historical and social contexts in the situation; and (d) engaging and participating in the process of change.

Using these four components of the model of awareness, one can predict a method of how one becomes engaged in social justice. First, one comes in contact with some kind of social injustice. Awareness of the problem increases, and an understanding rises of one's own connection to the issues. Once that happens, there is a desire for greater knowledge of the cultural background and history of the situation. Finally, one becomes involved in advocacy to rectify the injustice. She or he pursued a deeper understanding of the history and culture surrounding the situations. Finally, she or he became involved through engagement at some level. These are components however, not steps, and are therefore not linear. Instead they continually interact with an influence each other (Moeschberger et al., 2006).

In the same manner, social justice engagement service learning models seem to indicate that an individual with experience in and contact with social justice-related service learning is likely to be active in future advocacy activities (O'Brien, Eriksen, Sygna, & Naess, 2006). This would indicated that if a person is provided with an organized, hands-on learning experience and given a time and place to regularly discuss and reflect on the experience, it is possible that an interest in social justice advocacy can be nurtured. The ideal outcome of nurturing this desire to be active in social justice advocacy would be to have the individual remain active in promoting social justice following the initial experience. In addition, it is possible that self-efficacy might be

related to a sense of empowerment, which is essential for the facilitation of social justice advocacy (Van Voorhis & Hostetter, 2006).

Moreover, personality could also influence one's attitude toward social justice issues as it has been deemed an important force behind performance (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2003), creativity (Batey, Furnham, & Safiullina, 2010), and innovation behavior (Shalley & Gilson, 2004). However, the role of personality with social justice engagement has only rarely been examined. In this dissertation, I explore the potential relationship between social justice advocacy interests or commitment and some combinations of his/her personality traits. In assessing personality traits, I refer to the five-factor model of personality, the Big Five, which is a widely used construct that has gained acceptance as a general taxonomy and transcends language and other cultural differences (Yamagata et al., 2006). The Big Five Personality includes openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. In this study, I presume that social justice activists are more likely to have extraversion, conscientiousness, and agreeableness to experience personalities as Cunningham and Satore (2010) found extraversion is strongly associated with championing behaviors. Given that personality characteristics can be strong indicators on how a person is likely to respond in the face of an unfair act, personality may be used as a motivator for a person to become involved in social justice, and an indicator of individuals who are likely to engage in social justice advocacy.

### **Current Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors that can be associated with social justice advocacy in the context of sport organizations. For this study, I

implemented the purposeful sampling approach. 11 social justice activists in the field of sport or scholars studying the sport industry were asked to participate in interviews for the study. These participants were asked what factors have influenced their social justice advocacy and why they started becoming involved in social justice endeavors. The interviews enabled participants to talk about their own experiences in their own words and allow unexpected data to emerge (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Finally, theoretical framework and literature review have paved the way for the creation of the following research questions:

*RQ1: How do activists learn about social justice?*

*RQ2: How do activists get involved in social justice advocacy?*

*RQ3: What activities activists are involved?*

*RQ4: How does activists' personality play role in their activism?*



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to (a) examine the factors that can be associated with social justice advocacy in the context of sport, (b) describe the psychological processes associated with individuals' interest in and commitment to social justice, and (c) investigate the relationship between social justice advocacy and personality. This section defines and conceptualizes social justice and injustice within sports. Lastly, this chapter offers the theoretical framework.

#### **Social Justice**

Social justice is defined as “justice in terms of the distribution of advantages and disadvantages within a society” (Webster’s Dictionary, 2014). According to Toporek and Williams (2006), social justice also bears the implication that the spreading of advantages be fair and equitable to all individuals, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, physical makeup, or religious creed. The notion of social justice is extended into all contexts of life and society. Within the context of sports, social justice strives to ensure that opportunities are distributed fairly to as broad a group of people as possible. Where a disparity of opportunity is identified, then work is done to correct the perceived lack. Specifically, people become committed to change social injustices and ensure equity once a social injustice is located.

In this day and age, as society has become increasingly complex and diverse individuals find themselves living in close proximity to each other, there are those who have encountered some injustices. In answer to this, there are people or groups who have arisen to combat the injustices within the society (Fouad, Gerstein, & Toporek, 2006).

This is visible with the context of sport. As a means of accomplishing this goal, social justice activities engage in many actions (e.g., working to promote athletes' multicultural competence; working to combat injustice in sport such as sexual prejudice, gender inequality, and ageism; increasing the opportunities available for underrepresented people; understanding and diminishing career barriers for women; reaching out to work with individuals and families experiencing homelessness; empowering individuals, families, groups, and organizations; developing and implementing strategies to eliminate human rights abuses; striving to protect the environment; and influencing the legislative process). Throughout the years, activists have appeared who have become committed to these activities and have strived to correct injustices. It is crucial to understand why such individuals are interested in and engage in promoting social change in order to encourage and inspire others to become involved and create an injustice-free society. Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation is to describe the psychological processes associated with individuals' interest in and commitment to social justice and why people become involved in social justice advocacy.

Although society has undergone great strides towards mitigating social injustices and there are numerous, ongoing endeavors working toward that end, many current and former athletes and scholars have reported that social injustice continues to exist (Benn, Pfister, & Jawad, 2011; Grossman, 2014). According to the social identity theory, people tend to categorize themselves and others into various social categories, such as religious affiliation, gender, race and so on (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). It is essential to comprehend intergroup dynamics when social categorization is present because a member's

identification with the category has a strong influence on his or her perceptions, cognition, attitudes, and behavior.

Hogg and Terry (2001) posited that when a specific social identity becomes the salient basis for self-regulation in a particular context, self-perception and conduct become in-group stereotypical and normative, perceptions of relevant out-group members become out-group stereotypical, and intergroup behavior acquires, to varying degrees depending on the nature of relations between the groups, competitive and discriminatory properties. When individuals identify themselves with a particular category, they tend to behave consistently with their group identity (Kawakami & Dion, 1993), viewing themselves as indistinguishable from their group members, and out-group members as significantly different from themselves (Hogg & Terry, 2001). Furthermore, people have a fundamental tendency to maintain a level of positive self-concept. If a significant portion of one's self-concept is derived from one's social identity, then behaviors used to maintain and/or protect this identity will tend to be in intergroup terms. Hence, many scholars have found, under certain conditions, people who identify with their social categories engage in in-group bias and out-group derogative and discriminatory behaviors in intergroup settings (Reynolds, Turner, & Haslam, 2000). Such discriminatory behaviors can lead to the perpetration and continuation of social injustices and oppression.

Along with social categorization theory, Tatum (1997) identified the seven categories of underrepresented groups, including race/ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, and physical/mental ability. Underrepresented groups experience mistreatment, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism,

and violence, although the degree and form of these aspects of oppression may differ across different groups (Young, 1990). Individuals from marginalized groups continue to experience injustice through institutional discrimination, or "action, practices and policies embedded in the organization of society that have negative impacts on individuals and groups that have socially specified characteristics" (McNamee & Miller, 2004).

Furthermore, members of dominant and subordinate groups have different socially constructed views and perceptions of reality; in order to survive in an atmosphere of unequal power, members of subordinate groups tend to know more about the dominant groups than vice versa (Tatum, 1997).

### **Injustices in Sport**

Even in the modern world, it is an unfortunate reality that there are still numerous types of injustices to be found and the arena of sport is no exception from this fact.

According to Frey and Eitzen (1991), mainstream sport reflect and reinforces dominant hegemonies of oppression and inequality such as racial, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, and other social prejudices. These inequalities and prejudices are quite damaging to sport and produce many negative effects on various aspects in the field of sport. Female athletes in Islamic nations are just one example of a group or an individual who wishes to be allowed to participate in competitions, but are prohibited or effectively prevented from engaging in sports (Benn, Pfister, & Jawad, 2011). Unjust treatment may not always be so obvious and may instead be veiled or exist in more subtle forms.

However, the fact that they are concealed does not mean they can be ignored and there are numerous cases which demonstrate the number of injustices that occur in the context of sport.

## **Race/Ethnicity**

In American society, racial minorities have often been the victims of injustices. There is a mountain of evidence that convincingly shows that individuals belong to a racial minority have experienced discrimination at one time or another based solely on their race (Bell, Love, & Roberts, 2006). Racial differences have an effect on all aspects of American life. Opportunities in education, chances to secure work in the labor market, housing availability, depictions in the media, and treatment in the criminal justice system may all have different outcomes based on whether one is among the racial majority or a racial minority. In education, for example, racial minority students encounter a less rigorous curriculum, face lower expectations from their instructors, and receive inadequate information about financial aid, college opportunities, and other avenues to well-paying careers (Lipton & Oakes, 2003). In addition, the amount of income earned and the opportunities for individuals who otherwise boast the same amount of education attainment are widely disproportionate across racial groups (Lui, 2005). Moreover, according to Sickinger (1999), a bank is less likely to offer a mortgage to a Black applicant than to a White applicant with the same earnings, same educational background, and a comparable job. Researchers have also revealed that people of color pay more interest rates than White people do for similar mortgages (Perez, 2002).

In sports, there have been great improvements over the years, but there are still deep-rooted, pervasive injustices in the field of sport. Kahn (2006) found that racial minority coaches are paid less than White coaches. In addition, there are many athletes who have expressed that they have experienced discriminatory reactions by fans, co-workers, and coaches to one degree or another (Singer, 2005). Soccer seems to be the

sport that has the greatest number of complaints regarding racial discrimination. Until quite recently, it was not uncommon for black players to have bananas thrown at them during the course of a match. Equally as bad, many teams simply refused to admit black players onto their rosters (Grossman, 2014).

## **Gender**

Despite the general belief that men and women are equal in the eyes of the law, the reality is that men and women may experience the world quite differently from each other when it comes to wages, occupational gender roles, and authority (e.g., Padavic & Reskin, 2002). Although it is now rare to hear about a case of outright gender-based discrimination in the American workforce, some researchers have found that four to five percent of female workers perceived that they have experienced discrimination in the past year (Avery, McKay & Wilson, 2008). Many studies have focused on examining the existence of gender-based discrimination in this society, including in the areas of promotions (Olson & Becker, 1983), salaries (Meitzen, 1986), and performance evaluations (American Bar Association, 2006).

Throughout history, female athletes have been subjected to a variety of discriminatory practices that have affected, or even prevented, their access into sport. One of the earliest examples of this is the fact that women were not allowed to participate in the competitions of the ancient Olympics (Reeser, 2005). More recently, female in sport have faced many more injustices than males (Spoor & Schmitt, 2011). For example, female tennis players receive far less compensation than their male counterparts in professional tennis (Flake, Dufur & Moore, 2012). In addition, the number of female

coaches in both professional and collegiate sports is noticeably smaller than the number of male coaches (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014).

### **Sexual Orientation**

As in the case of women earlier, the past several decades have seen the general attitudes towards sexual minorities who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) have improved dramatically. However, they continue to face considerable, often severe, discrimination and injustices (Herek & McLemore, 2013). LGBT persons face tremendous difficulties growing up in a society where heterosexuality is often presented as the only acceptable orientation. For example, LGBT individuals are discriminated against in the labor market, in schools, and in hospitals. Additionally, there are many LGBT individuals who are mistreated and disowned by their own families (Subhrajit, 2014). After entering the labor force, the majority of LGBT individuals continue to hide their sexual orientation or endure harassment out of the fear of losing their jobs.

Injustice based on sexual orientation is clearly visible in numerous sport organizations. LGBT coaches told researchers that they conceal their sexual orientation in order to maintain their jobs (Krane & Barber, 2005) and often encounter hostility in the environment of the workplace (Griffin, 1998; Krane & Barber, 2005). Furthermore, there are many LGBT who are highly qualified for coaching positions but find they have a hard time securing jobs due to their sexual orientation. For example, Cunningham, Sartore, and McCullough (2010) found that individuals or committees often gave lower scores to LGBT applicants when reviewing job applications or evaluating interviews of job candidates as they were deemed to be lacking in moral fiber, meaning that they were seen as possessing less morality, low ethics, and general thought of as untrustworthy.

## **Social Class**

Along with the more familiar types of discrimination such as racism, sexism, heterosexism and ableism, another type of discrimination that has been identified in the social justice framework is classism. Collins and Yeskel (2005) defined classism as the assignment of characteristics of worth and ability based on social class. They further stated that the attitudes, policies, and practices that maintain an imbalance in valuing; and the “systematic oppression of subordinated groups (people without endowed or acquired economic power, social influence, or privilege) by the dominant groups (those who have access to control of the necessary resources by which other people make their living)” (p. 143). Unfortunately, it appears that children who suffer from this the most. Children living in poverty are more likely to experience the negative physical and emotional outcomes such as shorter life expectancy, higher infant mortality, and more preventable diseases (Leondar-Wright, 2005).

In sport, this type of social injustice based on one’s social status is pervasive. According to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association, the rate of sport participation is directly associated with family income. Approximately 25 percent of the population of the USA has a household income under \$25,000. However, only 15 percent of sports participants are in that group and only 11 percent of the households of soccer players fall into this category (Holland, 2014). Moreover, researchers found that a person who is among the wealthiest 25 percent of the population and has a university degree, has five times greater odds of playing sports than those of a person in the lowest 25 percent income bracket who does not have a degree (Stratton, Conn & Smallacombe, 2005).



## **Ability**

Individuals who have disabilities, such as physical, cognitive, hearing, and visual impairments, have historically experienced ableism which is a form of oppression based on their disability (Sue & Sue, 2003). Like all other forms of social injustices, people with disabilities have faced tremendous and persistent forms of discrimination, segregation, exclusion, and sometimes genocide (Longmore & Umanski, 2001). They have alternately been deemed as menaces to society needing to be controlled, as children to be pitied and cared for, and as objects of charity (Morris, 1991).

In many aspects, sport is considered to highlight and revere extremes of bodily physical perfection. As a result, individuals with disabilities have confronted access discrimination which prevents them from entering into the field of sport. Throughout the history of sport, persons with disabilities have experienced exclusion and disenfranchisement (Depauw & Doll-Tepper, 2000). Also, while sport competitions exist for the differently abled, most notably the Special Olympics, disability sport has not been considered as a legitimate sport, but rather as something less. Although integrated participation in sporting events is slowly becoming accepted, it is not yet a routine sport practice (DePauw & Gavron, 2005).

## **Social Justice Advocacy**

The identification of many social injustices has resulted in numerous researchers and athletes realizing that social change effort within their fields of interest is necessary. Athletes have tried to use their positions of fame and popularity to encourage fans to get involved in social justice activism. The methods they employ may be as simple as raising awareness by mentioning the problem and asking fans to become involved. Sometimes

the athletes become personally involved themselves. For example, Richard Lapchick has become recognized as a pioneer for racial equality and a human rights activist. He has produced a multitude of articles dealing with social justice and human rights issues in athletic departments, professional teams and leagues. Lapchick showed further commitment to these causes by providing diversity management training to sport organizations (Araton, 2011).

Like Lapchick, Pat Griffin who is the Founding Director of Changing the Game has led seminars on diversity issues and lesbian and gay issues in athletics at many universities. As a former athlete and teacher, she has been working for underrepresented LGBT issues. She is considered as one of the most influential pioneers and leaders in addressing LGBT issues in sports. Another activist is Hudson Taylor who is a three-time NCAA Division I All-American wrestler and a coach at Columbia University. Taylor is an advocate of LGBT equality who is attempting to eliminate homophobia in sports. He is the founder of an organization called Athlete Ally and encourages heterosexual athletes to become involved as ambassadors working towards that goal (Klemko, 2013).

Many social activists have taken up the challenges to eliminate social injustices and strive to achieve justice in their society. The work that they undertake is not to obtain power or recognition for themselves. Individuals may take on the role of activists in a variety of ways. Some begin through small involvement, such as helping with a street stall or attending a public meeting. Gradually they become more engaged over the years, perhaps becoming regular participants or even full-time activists. Their efforts have impacted our society and community and have tackled many social issues. Therefore, it is crucial to understand why such individuals are interested in and engaged in promoting

social change in order to encourage and inspire others to become involved and create an injustice-free society. Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation is to describe the psychological processes associated with individuals' interest in and commitment to social justice and why people become involved in social justice advocacy.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In this dissertation, I am interested in describing the psychological processes associated with individuals' interest in and commitment to social justice and the reasons behind why people get involved in social justice advocacy. In order to satisfactorily explain this, I have adopted Moeschberger and his colleagues' identified movement through four interconnected elements: (a) contact with a reality of oppression and/ or one group abusing power held over another group; (b) increasing awareness, formulating an efficacy to create change, and understanding the role of oneself in relation to this change; (c) developing a deeper understanding of the historical and social contexts related to the situation; and (d) engaging and participating in the process of change.

### **Models for Awareness and Engagement**

Moeschberger et al. proposed a model for awareness and engagement in order to facilitate change (Moeschberger et al., 2006). Their research identified movement through four components. These four components were: (a) contact with a reality of oppression in which one group abuses the power it wields over another group and conflict results as an outcome of the oppression; (b) increasing awareness, formulating an efficacy to create change, and understanding the role oneself holds in relation to this change; (c) developing a deeper understanding of the historical and social contexts in the

situation; and (d) actively engaging and participating in the processes necessary for change. An interesting fact that Moeschberger et al. (2006) observed was that the components of his model were not linear in nature and rather than an individual experiencing awareness and engagement to facilitate social change in a progression, the components continually interact with each other influencing the decisions an individual makes.

### **Contact with Injustice**

The first factor in Moeschberger et al.'s (2006) model involving oppression stresses contact, which may be either direct or indirect, with a situation deemed to be unjust. In other words, the individual may learn about the injustice through direct experience or through listening to another person's experience. For example, Hudson Taylor, who is a three-time NCAA Division I All-American wrestler and a coach at Columbia University, experienced homophobia in collegiate sports and through becoming friends with some homosexual men, he learned about the injustices and oppression he regularly faced. When Taylor began to wear an equality sticker from the Human Right Campaign on his wrestling headgear, he gained the attention of the media. Furthering the cause, Taylor started a blog about his experiences with homophobia. Reading what Taylor wrote, heterosexual athletes learned about the injustices faced by gay individuals and decided to found the not-for-profit organization, Athlete Ally. Media sources such as blogs and newscasts are invaluable in raising awareness of social injustices, but they are not the only methods an individual may encounter oppression. A person may hear a news report about an incident of racism or someone may have a friend who has been passed up for a promotion at work because of her or his gender. Others

may experience such injustices firsthand. The sheer amount of injustice and conflict in the world is overwhelming and it can easily cause individuals to feel powerless react once they have been made aware of them.

### **Increased Awareness**

Awareness, according to Stevens (1973), is not an end-product. Rather, he argues, it is an ongoing experience that is derived from the interactions between one's own self and the surrounding environment. Awareness does not occur in isolation. The manner in which awareness can be increased can be accomplished in a variety of ways. However, each of the methods to expand awareness involves attention to circumstances and a choice to observe and listen rather than to block out and withdraw. The most common way for awareness to take root is usually via an encounter with a social situation that is deemed unjust or unfair. Some kind of personal investment is felt during this encounter meaning that the victim of this injustice was either the person in question or someone he/she cares about. Because of the emotional connection, the injustice cannot be ignored. The investment is also emotional because injustice has an implicitly profound, negative effect on personal well-being. There also may be physical, financial, social and/or vocational implications to any particular encounter. This motivates one to devote energy towards seeing a positive change occur and this is facilitated by certain conditions. The individual's motivation is lifted by an optimistic sense that change is possible, that engagement in working towards the change is worthwhile, and that involvement makes sense from a certain standpoint, such as personal or cultural beliefs regarding what is considered fair, regardless of the amount of social pressure against working towards such change (Corner, Warren, Close, & Sparks, 1999). Furthermore, the chance of engagement

in working towards social justice increases if an individual feels a sense of responsibility for being part of a society that has been allowing the injustice to persist (Zelezny, Chua, & Aldrich, 2000). In addition, individuals who recognize and understand their own abilities and resources will feel a greater sense of empowerment which allows them to contribute towards social causes (Fetterman, 2001).

Another identified motivating factor was the individual's perception of having their own choice in the decision to participate in change. Individuals who felt that they were making the decision of their own volition were more motivated to be engaged than those individuals who merely felt they were victims of circumstance (Strube & Berry, 1985). One's role and motivation in social activism appears to be shaped by the perception of being a social activist who takes action to initiate social change and one who can offer positive contributions towards the intended goal. The role may also be shaped by previous experiences with the issues at hand or previous experience with some social activism. Were a social activist to provide an honest assessment of him/herself, (s)he would likely have to acknowledge two internal forces at war within their psyche. On the one hand, there is the understanding of the need to recognize social wrongs and the desire to rectify them. On the other hand, there is the desire to avoid the sacrifices that inevitably follow the decision to become engaged in social activism. These opposing desires could be paralyzing, but a person experiencing them may start reflecting on the situation to avoid a sense of guilt. Later, initial contributions to a cause may come in small steps by identifying values and small steps of action that are not overwhelming (Watkins, 1988). These initial steps may include such actions as simply learning more about a situation, discussing it with friends, relatives or co-workers, or writing a letter to

the local newspaper. Following an individual's contact with an issue of injustice, the next step is often the search for understanding from a historical and/or cultural context regarding the origins of the injustice.

Eli Wolff offers an example of many of the concepts discussed above. He is the current director of the Sport and Development Project at Brown University and a social activist in the sport arena who also happens to be a disabled athlete. In a 2012 interview, Eli Wolff was asked in reference to his social activism work, how his personal experiences shaped him. He responded by saying social justice had been a central interest to him since a very young age partly because of his disability and partly because he was influenced by his parents. Playing with both disabled and non-disabled athletes, Eli Wolff was very aware of the disparities that existed that limited participation for the former. When he became a university student, he attempted to read more about the issues but found there was very little published on the topic. He took it upon himself to research the issues. When he graduated from college, he learned about the case of Casey Martin who was suing the PGA. Martin, a disabled golfer, wanted to be allowed to use a golf cart on tour, but the PGA had refused. Wolff became decided to take a risk and become involved in fighting for a cause he felt strongly about. He organized a coalition to assist Martin in his case. Since that time, Wolff has been active in promoting the rights of disabled athletes.

### **Contextual Factors**

Contexts, be they historical, social or individual, are the key to understanding the dynamics of a situation where there is conflict or oppression. An individual or group may choose to partake in behavior that appears on the outside to be self-defeating,

counterproductive, or even incomprehensible in nature. Rather than providing such negative labels to such behavior, it is important to conceptualize the person or group in context, identifying the underlying structural sources and differentiating them from individual sources of the problem. A structural issue is one that is inherent in the very fabric of a society. For example, a child may not succeed academically because of a low capacity for learning based on hereditary traits or a child may not succeed in academics because that child attends a school in a community with limited resources to devote to education. There is an argument that states to ignore the structural factors which hinder the development of people leads to further problems for the very individuals whom activists attempting to help. Locating and identifying the historical and cultural factors leading to the injustice is considered to be a social responsibility (Martin-Baro, Aron, & Corn, 1994).

An understanding of the greater systems in play is important in considering this idea. A systemic approach is essential to situations involved with social justice. Social justice is generally concerned with the negative effects of oppression within a system rather than a more traditional concern of the effects on an individual. Systems are intricately designed structures that are influenced by a multitude of factors including the roles of the participants, boundaries, division of power, and history. Each system is a reflection of its own unique configuration with its own historical origins that may be perceived differently by different individuals living within the system. Some components of a system including the realms of culture, religion, ethnic identity, and language are so interconnected that a change in any one part will likely lead to change in another area of the system. Bronfenbrenner (1979) described systems that are embedded within a



complex of systems. Under Bronfenbrenner's model, the smallest system is the microsystem (e.g., home) which is connected to the next larger level of systems, the meso-level system (e.g., the community). This in turn is connected to larger and larger levels of the greater system until ultimately the macro-level system (society) is achieved. Each system contains its own set of beliefs and values for its members to adhere to and for the systems with which it interconnects.

A conceptualization that takes context into account may challenge the traditionally held, dominant cultural discourse, developing what is known as a critical consciousness (Freire, 1970). Critical consciousness involves contact with the reality of the situation and those living with the situation deemed unjust. From there, awareness beyond the official discourse develops. This usually occurs by locating and identifying the needs of those less powerful or less fortunate and through interviews, which allows their stories to be told. The results often stand in opposition to the official view of the problem and are guided by a desire to see justice and equality restored.

### **Engagement Advocacy**

The final piece of the model proposed by Moeschberger and his colleagues (Moeschberger, 2006) involves identifying and engaging in participation. This is concerned with activism which in turn then feeds further awareness. Solutions evolve from multiple voices and a collaborative effort to construct social change. Current and former athletes and scholars have been involved in social justice advocacy in many different fashions.

Lederach (1998) identified several possibilities to promote change and encourage engagement including top-level leadership, middle-ranged leadership, and grassroots

leadership. Top-level leadership would consist primarily of individuals in prominent positions such as world leaders who would be able to directly influence change through the creation of national policies. Typically, this level would be limited to exceptional situations dealing with executive leadership of organizations or other groups. Middle-ranged leadership functions primarily in the sphere of training others for involvement and being a key spokesperson on the issues facing society that need to be changed. Examples of work at this level include problem-solving workshops, training in conflict resolution, and peace commissions. Grassroots leadership encompasses active social involvement through direct involvement with those living the reality of injustice or inequality and includes such activities as grassroots training, prejudice reduction, and psychosocial work in post trauma.

In this process of activism, a primary goal is the empowerment of the under-privileged or oppressed who lack representation. This in sequence inspires a “sense of personal responsibility and collective efficacy.” To accomplish this involves enhancing their access to resources and power basic to their needs. This is accomplished through enhancing their knowledge and ability to cooperate with others while actively changing the targeted injustice to a just situation. The end result of this process is that members of oppressed groups gain greater control and influence over their present and future circumstances. All of these components we have introduced (contact, awareness, understanding historical and social context, and engagement) involve effective service to the oppressed, a challenge to traditional structures of oppression, the identification of the problems from the perspective of the oppressed, and a new rules of engagement involving the dismantling of structural injustice (Martin-Baro et al., 1994).

## **Personality**

Moreover, personality could also influence one's attitude toward social justice issues as it has been deemed an important force behind performance (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2003), creativity (Batey, Furnham, & Safiullina, 2010), and innovation behavior (Shalley & Gilson, 2004). However, the role of personality with social justice engagement has only rarely been examined. In this dissertation, I examined the potential relationship between social justice advocacy interests or commitment and some combinations of his/her personality traits. In assessing personality traits, I refer to the five-factor model of personality, the Big Five, which is a widely used construct that has gained acceptance as a general taxonomy and transcends language and other cultural differences (Yamagata et al., 2006). The Big Five Personality includes openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism.

First, extravert individuals are more likely to get engaged in the external world, enjoy interacting with people, and have a lot of energy. They tend to be action-oriented individuals (Laney, 2002) and therefore, they would get involved in social justice advocacy as Cunningham and Sartore (2010) found extraversion is strongly associated with championing behaviors.

Next, agreeable individuals value getting along with others and are generally considerate, kind, and willing to compromise their interest with others (Rothmann, 2003). According to Judge and Bono (2000), one's agreeableness is positively associated with the quality of relationships with one's team members. Thus, if one has contact with social injustices or suppressed members, s/he is more likely to get engaged in social justice advocacy.

Finally, Individuals who are high on conscientiousness are more organized and prone to pay attention to detail. According to John, Naumann and Soto (2008), the second trait, conscientiousness, refers to having high levels of ambition and encompassing good leadership skills, as well as being able to have “socially prescribed impulse control” (p. 120). As activists serve as a leader or pioneer in their organizations, the activists may be high on conscientiousness.

Therefore, persons who have higher levels of extravert, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, are more likely to learn about social injustices and partake in social change activities. Given that personality characteristics such as openness to experience, extroversion, and conscientiousness are strong indicators on how a person is likely to respond in the face of an unfair act, personality may be used as a motivator for a person to become involved in social justice and an indicator of individuals who are likely to engage in social justice advocacy. Based on the theoretical framework and the literature review, I created the following research questions:

*RQ1: How do activists learn about social justice?*

*RQ2: How do activists get involved in social justice advocacy?*

*RQ3: What activities activists are involved?*

*RQ4: How does activists' personality play role in their activism?*

### **Current Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors that can be associated with social justice advocacy in the context of sport organizations. For this dissertation, I used

the purposeful sampling approach. 11 social justice activists in the field of sport or scholars studying the sport industry participated in interviews for the study. These participants were asked what factors have influenced their social justice advocacy and why they started getting engaged in social justice endeavors.

The interview guide was developed to capture the participants' attitude and experiences in regard to social justice engagement in the field of sports. Specifically, based on the theoretical framework, I developed interview guide consisted of questions regarding social justice activism (e.g., How did you get involved in activism? What were your first steps that you took to start making changes and what reaction did you encounter? How do you view your role in fighting this issue? Why do you think this injustice exists? How do you encourage others to get involved?) and participants' personality (e.g., Do you think your personality play role in your activism? Do you consider yourself a proactive person?).

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the methods implemented to address the purpose of this dissertation. It begins with my research position statement, explaining why I chose qualitative research approach and how my research position has been developed. Then, it clarifies qualitative research approach. Then, I detail purposeful sampling and explain why I used the purposeful sampling approach. Also, I explain how I contacted potential participants and introduce those who participated in the study. Finally, I go into detail on how this study is conducted.

#### **Research Position Statement**

Since embarking on my journey to pursue a doctoral degree, I consider myself a researcher who focuses more on causal comparative and experimental approaches. Therefore, my approach to qualitative research can be identified as belonging to post positivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). According to Havercamp and Young (2007), the post-positivist paradigm is based on the ontological assumption that reality exists separate from the perceiver and that knowledge can be identified and underlies the familiar approach to psychological science. In addition, post-positivists strive to engage in social construction of a narrative with their participants. In that way, I hoped to activate the interviewee's 'stock of knowledge' (Ritchie & Rigano, 2001). Given that, using purposeful sampling helped understand the psychological processes associated with an individual's interest in and commitment to social justice and why people become involved in social justice advocacy in the context of sport organizations. Moreover, in this dissertation, I interpreted inquiry as a series of logically related steps, believe in

multiple perspectives from participants rather than a single reality, and espouse rigorous methods of qualitative data collection and analysis. In addition, I employed multiple levels of data analysis for rigor, used computer programs (e.g., NVivo 9 and mindmap) to assist in the analysis, and wrote the results and analysis in the form of scientific reports, with a structure resembling quantitative approaches.

### **Qualitative Research**

According to Peck and Secker (1999), qualitative research has three crucial implications from a research perspective: (a) the purpose of research is not to establish objective facts but to explore how participants make sense of topics of interest; (b) theories are researchers own interpretation of the participants' understanding; and (c) to access qualitative research, one must provide detailed description of data and make process of analysis transparent. Qualitative research has been implemented in cases when the researchers are aimed at gathering more in-depth information. A much generalized definition was supplied by Denzin and Lincoln (2005): "Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world." (p. 3).

In addition, Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) posited that the qualitative research approach is based on the assumption that individuals construct social reality through meanings and interpretations that are usually situational. Qualitative research includes the use of qualitative data, such as interviews, participant observation, and documents in order to grasp and explain social phenomena (Merriam, 1988). According to Merriam, qualitative research ought to maintain some essential components, including the goal of eliciting understanding and meaning, the researcher as primary instrument of data

collection and analysis, the use of fieldwork, and inductive orientation to analysis, and findings that are richly descriptive. Qualitative researchers can be found in many disciplines and fields (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and they use a various approaches, methods, and techniques (Merriam, 1988).

Qualitative research contains a variety of empirical materials: case studies, personal experiences, introspection, life stories, interviews, observations, historical data, interaction, and visual texts that describe routines and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this dissertation, I am more interested in capturing one's personal experience and describing the psychological processes associated with individuals' interest in and commitment to social justice, and why people get involved in social justice advocacy.

### **Purposeful Sampling**

Purposeful sampling was used to collect potential participants. According to Patton (1990), all types of sampling in qualitative research may be encompassed under the broad term of "purposeful sampling." He argues that "qualitative inquiry typically focuses in depth on relatively small samples, even single cases, selected purposefully" (p. 169). Patton (1990) laid out fifteen strategies to assist in selecting cases. The strategies he suggested encourage researchers to purposefully select their samples that best fit the study at hand. These fifteen strategies are made up of the following:

- Extreme or deviant case sampling: Focuses on cases that are unique or unusual, as they can be enlightening or troublesome to the researcher.
- Intensity sampling: Focuses on the information-rich cases that provide good examples but, unlike extreme cases, do not distort the results of the subjects being



studied.

- Maximum variation sampling: Highlights and describes the central themes or results of case studies that unites a large number of the cases.

- Homogeneous sampling: A useful sampling strategy for identifying sub-groups within a larger group of different types of participants.

- Typical case sampling: This type of sampling is often conducted with an insider's knowledge of what constitutes typical within a given program of study.

- Stratified purposeful sampling: This method combines the strategy of typical case sampling with selections of above and below average cases, but still representing a common core with what constitutes each strata.

- Critical case sampling: Critical cases are those that are particularly important or dramatically influence choices within a case. Examples are statements such as, "If it can't happen here, it can't happen anywhere."

- Snowball or chain sampling: A method of gathering names that could provide critical or information rich samples. It requires the researcher asking participants a question such as "Who should I talk to about..." Very often, the same names will come up within a topic.

- Criterion sampling: Studying all cases that reflect a predetermined importance to the research.

- Theory-based or operational construct sampling: A more formal version of criterion sampling that takes into account variables such as period of life, economic spheres and background.

- Confirming and disconfirming cases: This is a type of exploring in which large

amounts of data is collected and examining it for patterns which may emerge. These patterns are then studied in depth.

- Opportunistic sampling: Decisions that are quickly made in the field that take advantage of unforeseen opportunities in gathering data.
- Purposeful random sampling: Ensuring that sampling, even with a small number of participants, is random to provide examples of a wider slice of life.
- Sampling politically important cases: When evaluating politically sensitive issues, it is important to be certain that politics do not play a role in determining the outcome of the study
- Convenience Sampling: The least desirable sampling technique and the most common. It involves doing what is fast and easy. It is often used by researchers who believe their sample sizes are too small, so they select ones that are easy to identify rather than ones that provide the most information.

In this dissertation, I specifically implemented snowball or chain sampling to gather names of potential participants who could provide rich information. Especially, in regard to social justice advocacy, selecting active social justice activists within field of sport would allow the participants to share their experience, thoughts, and strategies. These participants were subsequently asked to recommend other activists for this study. In this manner, I was able to include potential participants who were endorsed by their peers. Therefore, snowball or chain purposeful sampling was appropriate in this setting.

Moreover, along with Patton (1990), Morse (1991) states that “when obtaining a purposeful sample, the researcher selects a participant according to the needs of the study” (p. 129). She described this type of sampling as the researcher initially choosing to

‘interview informants with a broad general knowledge of the topic or those who have undergone the experience and whose experience is considered typical. Then as the study progresses, the description is expanded with more specific information, and participants with that particular knowledge are deliberately requested. Finally, informants with atypical experiences are sought so that the entire range of experiences and the breadth of the concept or phenomena may be understood’ (p.129). This description of purposeful sampling” seems to indicate that the sampling is directed by a desire to include a range of variations of the phenomenon in the study.

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the factors that can be associated with social justice advocacy in sports and thus, using the purposeful interview approach is appropriate to meet the purpose of this study, as Morse insisted (1991). It is important to select a sample deliberately in the initial stages of the study. Since this study is aimed to examine why and how individuals engage in social justice advocacy in sports, I selected potential interviewees purposefully.

For this study, 35 social justice activists in the field of sport (e.g., Eli Wolff, Lawrence Cann, Nancy Hogshead-Maker, and so on) or scholars studying the sport industry (e.g., Mary Hums, Pat Griffin, Richard Lapchick, Ellen Strawsky, and so on), were purposefully selected and asked to participate in interviews for this study. Of this sampling frame, 11 activists agreed to take part in this study and were willing to share their experiences. These participants were subsequently questioned as to what factors influenced their social justice advocacy and the reasons behind their becoming involved in social justice efforts. The activists discussed their own experiences in their own words and offered some surprising and unexpected data.

## **Procedures**

First, the interview guide was developed to capture the participants' attitude and experiences in regard to social justice engagement in the field of sports. Specifically, based on the theoretical framework, I developed an interview guide consisting of questions regarding social justice advocacy. First, in order to understand how participants define social justice activity, I started with the following question, "What does social justice activism mean to you?" Also, to provoke responses that could provide more understanding and insight regarding first experience or contact with a reality of oppression, questions were generated (e.g., "How did you get involved in activism?" and "How did you learn about the injustice?"). Next, questions were developed to understand how the interviewees' interest and awareness were increased (e.g., "What were the first steps that you took when you learned of and experienced the injustice?" and "What were the first steps that you took to start making changes?") Moreover, in order to learn a deeper understanding of his/her attitudes and experience regarding the injustice, questions were created (e.g., "Why do you think this injustice exists?" and "How do you view your role in fighting this issue?"). Then, questions were made to understand social justice engagement interest (e.g., "What type of advocacy are you engaged in?" and "How do you encourage others to get involved?"). The final interview guide consisted of questions regarding participants' personality (e.g., "Do you think your personality plays role in your activism?" and "Do you consider yourself a proactive person?").

## **Data Collection**

The initial contact of all of the potential participants was accomplished via email. In that first email, the selected activists were informed of the nature of the study and

asked if they would consider in participating. If they replied with an affirmative answer, we determined a mutually agreeable time and date to conduct the interview over the telephone and email. Admittedly, there are some immediate drawbacks to interviewing by phone and email as non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions and body language, cannot be observed by the interviewer. However, they also can be free-flowing and enriching as well as practical. The phone interviews were semi-structured, and the participants were free to speak as much as they liked on any one question. These conversations were digitally recorded and then transcribed in their entirety. All the interviews were approximately twenty to thirty minutes in length, depending on the individual.

Moreover, a few participants were interviewed via email exchange. In fact, research has shown that an asynchronous email exchange encourages participants to discover and revisit their visions into their developing professional identities, allowing them to move back and forth through their narratives, thinking about their responses, drafting and redrafting what they want to write (Mann & Stewart, 2000).

Also, in order to have a better understanding of the participants, their backgrounds and their areas of interest, a document analysis was conducted. This allowed the researcher to know more about their previous achievements.

### **Data Analysis**

Following the first interview, the analysis of the data commenced. This was accomplished in the following manner. I first re-listened to the interview to gain some first impressions and initial thoughts. Then the interview was slowly transcribed verbatim. The transcript was carefully read, and doing so provided further thoughts

concerning the interview. This process enabled me to become familiar with the details of the responses provided by the participants.

In order to locate the themes for this research, open coding was used. According to Schwandt (2001), open coding is “a procedure that disaggregates the data, breaks it down into manageable segments, and identifies or names those segments” (p. 26). This was accomplished by pouring over the details of the transcripts, interview notes and supplemental information revealed by the search and analysis of documents of the participants work. I then used to research questions as guides to help me come up with general themes which were then broken up into more concrete concepts. If themes were similar and could not be used alone, they were combined in a process known as axial coding which relates initial themes to one another (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The resulting list of themes will be elaborated on in the Results section where quotations of note will serve as credence. This method of reporting the results is known as selective coding as defined by Creswell (1998).

### **Trustworthiness**

It is well-documented that qualitative researchers have questioned themselves and been concerned with the reliability and validity of their research (Patton, 2002). Lincoln and Guba (1985) outline four ideals that serve to illustrate the trustworthiness of a study. These ideals are credibility, confirmability, transferability, and dependability. In order to ensure the first ideal of the four, a researcher may have to do a triangulation of the data and undergo peer debriefing, and member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In my study, triangulation was accomplished by interviewing not only scholars, but current and former athletes. Moreover, while interviewing the participants, I reiterated their response

to make sure I understood correctly as a member checking and once the transcription was complete, I sent the transcript to the participants to confirm their responses were correctly transcribed. Next, in order to ensure dependability, I detailed the methods and procedures section and asked third-party individuals to serve as auditors for this study. Then, in order to carry out confirmability, I kept a reflexive journal to understand my perspectives and opinions after each interview. Finally, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), transferability can be achieved by providing a thick, rich description of the research setting and thus researchers can carry out similar studies in different settings. Therefore, in order to satisfy this notion, I provided detailed information about the research procedure and settings.

### **Participant Bios**

**Richard Lapchick**, author and scholar, has become recognized as a pioneer for racial equality and a human rights activist. He has produced numerous articles dealing with social justice and human rights issues in athletic departments, professional teams and leagues. Dr. Lapchick showed further commitment to these causes by providing diversity management training to sport organizations.

**Mary Mums** has been active with sports, particularly with the Paralympics, for nearly two decades. Her work in this area began in 1996, when she volunteered for the Summer Paralympic Games. This was followed by other volunteer experiences at the Winter Paralympic Games in Salt Lake City in 2002 and again in 2010 in Vancouver. Between 2002 and 2010, Dr. Hums worked with the Olympic Softball team and the Paralympic Goalball team. In 2006, she represented the United States at the International Educators Session in Greece. She also received academic recognition for her work. She

holds a PhD in Sport Management, and MA in Athletic Administration, an MBA and a BBA in Management.

**Ellen Staurowsky** is known for her work in gender equality in sport. She is a former field hockey and women's lacrosse coach at Oberlin University, Director of athletics and men's soccer coach at Daniel Webster College, Director of Physical Education, recreation and intramurals at Rutgers University, and Director of Athletics at William Smith College. She currently teaches courses at Drexel University that focus on a variety of issues in sports including gender equality, hazing, player compensation rights, sexual violence, and Native American mascot issues, as well as administrating the university's LGBT Sport Blog.

**Peter Roby** is a former basketball player whose career led him to coaching after graduation. He served as the basketball coach at Harvard University for six years followed by three additional years as Assistant Coach. This was followed by a successful career as Director of Key Account Marketing and US Sport Marketing with Reebok. He also taught in this time and was recognized as one of the most influential sport educators by the Institute of International Sport in 2007. In 2010, Peter Roby was named to the NCAA Division 1 Men's Basketball Committee. He is currently the Athletic Director at Northeastern University where he is very outspoken about several sport related issues, such as the pressure placed on children in sport, performance-enhancing drugs and the overly-permissive attitudes given to athletes.

**Pat Griffin** is a professor in the social justice education program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and her research and writing interests include heterosexism/homophobia in education, LGBT teachers and students, and



heterosexism/homophobia in athletics. She had led seminars on diversity issues and LGBT issues in sport at numerous universities and colleges.

**Tyler Spencer** earned his BA from the University of Virginia majoring in International Health and his MSc in Evidence-Based Social Intervention from Oxford University. He founded the organization known as Grassroots in 2009 with the purpose of using sports to battle HIV. After working for two summers in South Africa, Tyler came to realize that the Washington DC area also has a serious HIV problem but also knew that the curriculum Grassroots taught in South Africa could be applied in DC. In recognition of his efforts, Tyler has won multiple awards including the Clinton Global Initiative University Outstanding Commitment to Action Award. He currently is the North American representative of the Global Youth Coalition on HIV/Aids even as he continues his work with Grassroots.

**Eli Wolff** is a director of the Sport and Development Project at Brown University. Also, he was a member of the United States Paralympic Soccer Team in the 1996 and 2004 Paralympic Games. Now Eli Wolff is well known for his social justice advocacy. He has been very active in Olympism and Olympic education, as well as in the area of athlete activism.

**Nancy Hogshead-Makar** is a former competition swimmer who represented the United States at the 1984 Summer Olympic. She is also a life-long advocate for access and equality in athletics and is an internationally recognized legal expert on sports issues. Ms. Hogshead-Makar founded *Champion Women* in 2014, leading focused efforts to aggressively advocate for equality, accountability, and transparency in sport. The issues that her organization targets include sport access and equality, sexual harassment, sexual

abuse and assault, employment and pregnancy discrimination, and legal enforcement under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Sports Act.

**Courtney Szto** is a current PhD student at Simon Fraser University working toward a degree in Communications. She is also a former hockey player, which along with Canadian nationalism and immigration issues, is the focus of her research. She is the owner of a blog called The Rabbit Hole, which focuses on topics related to sport, health and physical fitness. Courtney Szto is also co-president of the United Nations Association in Canada-Vancouver Branch.

**Spencer Wood** is a former NCAA Division I football player and is also a social justice activist who serves as an agent of social change in a concentrated effort to prevent violence against women. In his work, he promotes awareness regarding the frequency and root causes of violence against women through various media campaigns and community-wide events.

**Blake Skjellerup** is New Zealand Olympic speed skater who has gained an international profile as an elite competitor and one of the few world-class male athletes to come out as a gay while competing. He represented his country and competed at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, where he placed 16th in the world. After the Vancouver Olympics, he came out publicly as a gay man to let him live his life free of speculation or secrecy, and to serve as a much-needed role model and advocate for LGBT athletes at all levels.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to offer an overview of the study findings. In doing so, I following the primary aims of the study, including the participants' definition of social justice; how they learned about social justice (RQ1); their involvement in social justice advocacy (RQ2); their social justice activities (RQ3); and the way in which their personality affected their activism (RQ4). In addition, I outline themes that emerged outside the conceptual framework, all of which are integrated into the research questions.

#### **Definition of Social Justice Advocacy**

First, when it came to the participants offering their definitions of social justice advocacy, two major themes emerged. The first theme identified was the Social Conscience, which is a sense of responsibility or concern for the problems and injustices in society. The other theme was labeled as the Champions of a Cause, which was applied to the activists' engagement in advocacy for people who are unable to stand up and speak for themselves.

#### **Social Conscience**

Ellen Staurowsky was among six participants who were placed in the social conscience category. Her definition of social justice activism was as follows:

Social justice activism means that if there is something that someone is inspired to change something. If they believe that there's something that is unfair or something that negatively impacts others in a way that is unjust.

Similarly, Blake Skjellerup and Courtney Szto believe that social justice activism is a responsibility that individuals need to try to make a better world. Courtney Szto noted that:

I feel it is a responsibility that each person has to try and make the world a better place in whatever way it possible to them.

While Blake Skjellerup said:

Social justice activism means standing up for others and myself on issues that I believe need addressing. Issues that adversely affective the basic human rights of individuals where ultimately law and policy need to change in order for social equality to prevail.

### **Champions of a Cause**

However, other activists such as Peter Roby, Richard Lapchick, and Nancy Hogshead-Maker, were placed in the other category identified with the theme of champions of a cause. This was because they consider social justice activism as an action for underrepresented individuals who do not have power or voice. Peter Roby noted that:

Social justice means to me that you make it a part of who you are as a person and the perspective that you bring to your life; considering what is just, what is fair, and trying to be thoughtful about those that maybe do not have a voice or a bit oppressed in some way. Trying to do whatever you can, whether it is in your professional life or your personal life to undo some of those injustices and advocate for people who may be feeling the effects of inequality in some way.

His belief that people need to consider those individuals who are oppressed in society in some manner was similar to former Olympian Nancy Hogshead-Makar's idea, which she expressed in the following way:

Social justice activism means speaking truth to power for those that cannot speak for themselves. It means not just pointing out the problem, but holding decision-makers accountable. It means risk.

Given that, social justice advocacy is encompassed and explained by the two themes that emerged in the study, namely the Social Conscience and the Champions of a Cause, I can define social justice activism as “advocating for *people without power or voice, while also cognizing a sense of responsibility to combat the problems and injustices of society.*”

### **RQ1: Learning about Social Justice**

Following the definition of social justice, the first research question asked of the participants was regarding how they learned about the injustice, which inspired them to become activists in the first place. According to Moeschberger et al.'s model for awareness and engagement (Moeschberger et al., 2006), one of the four factors is a contact with injustice. However, the contact does not necessarily have to be direct contact. This could be seen as the themes began to emerge in this study. Two clear themes were identified: Direct Experience and Indirect Experience. Many activists indicated that they experienced unjust and unfair treatment based on their race, gender, and sexual orientation at early in their lives. In fact, their experiences overlapped in many ways.

## **Direct Experience**

Peter Roby states that he realized that injustices exist in the world based on race when he was quite young and that his parents strongly influenced aspects of that realization. He said:

So, I guess being an African-American male, I think you're just more automatically sensitized to those issues in society because they impact you, maybe more personally.

In addition to Peter Roby, three other participants reported having directly experiencing injustice based on race, ability, sexual orientation, and gender.

Pat Griffin had the following to say about her direct experience:

Well, I know that certainly my motivation came because I am a lesbian, and I had experience not necessarily with discrimination, but more fear and concern of what would happen if people knew that I was a lesbian, and coaching high school first and actually the college-athlete high school, college-athlete and then later as a high school and college coach. I was very much concerned that I would be discriminated against, if people knew who I was.

Meanwhile, Eli Wolff had the said about his own experiences:

I think it probably came up to my own experiences as an athlete because I was able to be an athlete in those Paralympics and athletes with disabilities, but I was also competing in mainstream sports, or kids without disabilities. And so, I was able to see the differences in the disparities and what little support and infrastructure was available for athletes with disabilities. So that was sort of a

social justice issue that I first got interested in but then, I started to learn more about judicial issues in sport and gender equality

### **Indirect Experience**

Other participants, including Richard Lapchick, indirectly experienced injustice in society. In Richard Lapchick's case, he was strongly influenced by and learned from his father. Others also mentioned family members had a strong influence on them when it came to shaping their awareness of injustice and other influences proved to be co-workers, friends, and environment. The following is from Richard Lapchick's experience.

I was raised in a family where social justice issues were important. My earliest memories as a child were of people displaying their unhappiness with my father and there had been hateful ways because he had signed the first Black player in the history of the NBA in the 1950. So I saw many people reacting negatively to him.

Although identified above as having direct experience, Peter Roby also mentions indirect experience as part of his motivation to fight against injustice. Like Richard Lapchick, Peter Roby credits experiences with his father for inspiring him.

I was lucky enough from an early age to have a father who was engaged in politics and social justice and wanting to be helpful to others. So I had many conversations with him as a boy growing up and then more as an adult about society and about oppression and discrimination as a person of color.

While family is important, the experiences of friends and co-workers can also provide the motivation and inspiration for a person to become an activist against injustice. Ellen Staurowsky mentioned that she was strongly influenced by predecessors

when she was hired by Oberlin College. Despite the fact that the Tommy Smith of the 1968 Mexico City Olympics Black power revolt no longer was employed by Oberlin, his influence on the department was strong and it shaped her at a critical time in her professional development.

Mary Hums had a particularly poignant episode that shaped her activism. She related the following story:

I had a colleague who is one of my coaches and we used to ride together because we both like bike riding. So, one day we went for a country ride and unfortunately, there was an accident and my colleague was hit by a truck.... She survived the accident, but she was severely disabled for the next 20 years of her life and she was a sports woman. She loved golf, swimming and cycling and what I saw was through what rehabilitation that she could have. I saw how sport played a role in that and how sport helped her become... as complete a person as she could, given that she was severely disabled... I saw firsthand what sport can do for a person with disability.

Likewise, Tyler Spencer also got involved in activism because of issues his friend was experiencing.

I went to South Africa and lived with a friend who was slightly older than me; when I was staying with him, his ex-girlfriend became HIV positive which was a very powerful experience because she told the news that she was suicidal and she didn't know where to turn and she felt like she couldn't talk to her family or anyone else and that her life was going to be over because she didn't get any sort of treatment.



In addition to living human beings and their experiences, the environment also plays a factor in motivating people to action. As previously mentioned above Ellen Staurowsky stated the department she worked at a university provided her with motivation. She went on to say:

When I became a professor, I was part of higher education... The purpose of universities and colleges to serve the public good was a driving force and continues to be important to me.

It became clear while analyzing the experiences related by participants that while direct and indirect experiences could easily be separated and categorized, they could be cited by an individual as both being part of the motivation to fight against injustices in society. Illustrative of this, Peter Roby had stated that as an African-American, he had encountered unequal treatment when he was quite young, but also mentions his father is his social activism. The findings are consistent with Moeschberger et al.'s (2006) model in that contact played an essential part in developing awareness of social injustices within each of the participants of this study.

### **Indirect Contact**

While some people had direct experience with contact, there was also evidence of indirect contact. Here, the participants spoke of others in their lives who affected their attitudes and behaviors. Home life was important to two of the respondents.

Peter Roby: I was lucky enough from a very early age to have a father who was engage in politics and social justice and wanting to be helpful to others. So I had many conversations with him as a boy growing up and then more as an adult

about society and about, you know, oppression and discrimination as a person of color.

Richard Lapchick: I was raised in a family where the social justice issues were important. My earliest memories as a child were people displaying their unhappiness with my father and there had been hateful ways because he had signed the first black player in the history of the NBA in 1950. So I saw people reacting negatively to him. Once there was an activist, a civil rights activist, in the 1950s before it became known as civil rights movements and she had a big influence on me.

Spencer Wood was also influenced by someone involved in advocacy, showing that raising awareness and encouraging others to act is an important part in creating new activists.

Spencer Wood: So When I was a sophomore, an older guy on our team was involved in male athlete against violence. And I knew that he was doing that because of the stuff he was bringing in the locker room and the programs and the presentations and stuff that they were doing as a group and I was interested so I talked to him about it a little bit and then from there he recommended that I send in my application to replace him the following year and so during that application process I looked more into the class, what the mission was, you know what the goal of the class were, things like that and from there just kind of took off for me.

Finally, some of the participants spoke of their work colleagues' influence. Ellen Staurowsky's work, for instance, provided her with the influence and motivation to get involved in social justice.

I had the opportunity when I started my professional career to be influenced by some of the most forward-thinking individuals on social justice in sport. I was very young when I got my first assistant professorship. I was 23 I think, at the time and I was teaching and coaching at Oberlin College in Ohio. And I was hired at a time when two sign of the most significant of the social justice leaders had just left. One of them was Jack Scott and the other one was Tommy Smith. Thus, just as direct contact with injustice could prompt people to be socially active, so too do instances of indirect contact.

### **RQ2: Involvement in Social Justice Advocacy**

The second research question focused on exploring how activists got involved in social justice advocacy. Three factors were identified, including increased awareness, atypical experience, and emotional responses. Importantly, I found two factors that expand Moeschberger et al's (2006) conceptual framework.

#### **Increased Awareness**

When activists learned and/or experienced injustice, they tended to increase their own awareness of the injustice to have a deeper understanding of the issue, understand their role in the issue, formulate an efficacy to create change, and become motivated to engage in the activity.

In some instances, Richard Lapchick turned to printed materials in order to learn more about the issues he had experienced. Importantly, he also spoke with others who had shared his experiences. He said:

I began to read about various racial issues...and developed friendships through sports with two young African-American urban males who went on to become famous people. And having got to know them when I was 13 and 14 then and sharing their world views of racism and its effects helped to open my eyes and make me want to get involved.

Peter Roby provided an example of how some activists become educated on an issue by stating that he received training to become more knowledgeable about issues that were impacting diversity and conflict resolutions. Also, after becoming aware of HIV through his friend's experience with his ex-girlfriend, Tyler Spencer took to gaining a greater understanding of the disease. As Tyler Spencer noted:

I educated myself... more and more about what the thing was. I didn't know anything about the virus, about how prevalent it really was, about how it's transmitted, how it's prevented and I didn't understand it culturally.

Some other activists understood what their role could be in order to effect change of the injustice that they had become aware of. Mary Hums explained:

At the time it was the late 1990s. You know there were numerous people writing about gender in sport and numerous people were starting to write about race in sport. Nobody was writing about disability in sport so it was an area ready to be explored. So, okay "here we go."

Other activists also started to get involved in ways that went beyond just educating themselves. They became motivated to formulate efficacy to social change, understanding their ability to do so, as Mary Hums had done. Pat Griffin remarked on her first experience addressing a wider audience on the change she hoped to see:

I started getting braver and I wanted to have a bigger platform to effect sports in a much broader way. I know that the first time I spoke out publicly about homophobia and sports and women sports in particular, was in 1981 at a conference in DC. It was very controversial and viewed a pretty crazy thing to do, because no one was talking and using the word lesbian in public in relationship to woman sports...

While activists have tried to change social injustices, they often find themselves faced with great challenges and difficulties. Richard Lapchick told of an extreme case where he encountered both physical danger and economic threats. Richard Lapchick said:

I was the American leader as you may know, the sports boycott of South Africa and trying to trying to protest against the South African team coming here in 1978 and as a result of that I was physically assaulted in my office in a school that I was teaching at the time... and (I) had liver damage, kidney damage, a hernia, concussion, and had the N-word carved in my stomach with a pair of office scissors.

He went on to say that after leaving Virginia, where the assault took place, and moving to New York to work for the United Nations, his apartment was ransacked and car vandalized because of the work in which he was involved.

Dr. Lapchick was not alone in suffering for a cause, although his by a far was the most extreme case related in this study. Others however, were under constant threat of losing their jobs such as Ellen Staurowsky. Such threats had been effectively utilized before as Ellen Staurowsky narrated, but she also provided a clue as to why she and other activists take those risks:

And I took risks that other people wouldn't take. I'm not entirely sure why that is. But for me I couldn't have lived with the alternative of not saying something. And frankly, I was also very fortunate because I never did lose my job. I do know of other women who have and who were kind of so threatened that they just stopped speaking up.

That one phrase, "I couldn't live with the alternative of not saying something" is a theme that runs through many of the experiences recorded during this study among those who have faced negative reactions to their work against injustice.

Not all activists face threats to life, property or livelihood, but nonetheless may find themselves facing criticism. Spencer Wood now speaks up when males refer to women in a derogatory fashion only to face accusations of having become "soft" which is the equivalent of questioning his masculinity. Courtney Szto was criticized for using soccer to assist and provide opportunities for children living in poverty in Africa.

Courtney Szto said:

Explaining to people how sport could be used as a tool for development was difficult and often drew criticism like "these kids don't have food or water but we'll give them soccer?" or "why go to Africa and help when people need help here?"

Not all reactions to activists are criticism. Courtney Szto has stated that she has received recognition for her writing on social media sites and learned that her blog has a large following that goes beyond her friends. In addition, Eli Wolff indicated that he received a lot of support as he noted:

I would say people have been generally supportive, especially on issues of inclusion. You know, trying to gain more access and more opportunities for people with disabilities and other things around this sport development. Social change in sports, human rights. Mostly, I've been supportive of a lot of that.

It is clear from the experiences related by the participants of this study that there is some risk in becoming an advocate for social change in sport and in the larger society. Studies have identified two factors at odds with each other within the mind of a person engaged in or considering engagement in advocacy (Watkins, 1988). First, there is the fact that the individual has been moved to take action and to learn as much as possible about the perceived injustice in order to combat it effectively. However, there is an opposing factor in the minds of most people to avoid the risks and sacrifices associated with trying to stimulate social change (Watkins, 1988) Watkins argued that it could be paralyzing and could prevent one from taking action. This was reflected when Ellen Staurowsky stated many feminist at the time who wanted equality in women's sport were silenced under the threat of losing their means of supporting themselves. Increasing awareness of the situation is one way, Watkins mentions that activists use to overcome their fear and decide to take action.

## **Atypical Experience**

In addition to increased awareness, others spoke of atypical experiences—a theme beyond that of Moeschberger et al.'s (2006) model. While I recognize that the atypical experience could have raised their awareness of the issue (and thus be viewed as a component of the previous theme), the experiences relayed below suggest they are unique in and of themselves. Take, for example, the experience of Mary Hums. She said:

I had a colleague who is one of my coaches and we used to ride together because we both like bike riding. So, one day we went for a country ride and unfortunately, there was an accident and my colleague was hit by a truck. I was missed. I am still here. Truck missed me, the truck hit her. She survived the accident. But, she was severely disabled for the next 20 years of her lives and she was a sport woman.

The accident was particularly jarring for Mary Hums, not just because she was spared while her friend was injured, but also because of the emotional connection the two shared. Thus, she was with her friend throughout the rehabilitation process. This experience allowed her to see the efficacy of sport and physical activity for people with disabilities:

She loves golf, swimming, and cycling and what I saw was through what rehabilitation that she could have I saw how sport played a role in that and how sport helped her become sort of as complete a person as she could be given that she was severely disabled. Just little things.. like you know, playing catch with a soccer ball or into a pool. So, I saw first hand, what sport can do for persons with the disability.



This led Mary Hums down a path that has become her lifelong work where she advocates the rights of physically challenged athletes.

As another example, Nancy Hogshead-Maker was raped as a sophomore in college at Duke while out running. She now battles against violence against women.

My rape ripped apart my world-construct that rape happened to girly-girls, girls that drank or were asking for it or couldn't fight or were vulnerable or ... any number of characteristics that weren't me. I could not hold those views and simultaneously recognize that I had been raped.

Others in her life helped her manage and cope with this experience, ultimately using the traumatic occurrence as a source of inspiration for social justice advocacy. She relayed the following:

My professors and academic study helped me integrate the experience, helped me create a new world-construct. My favorite professor was Professor Jean O'Barr. The final exam for her "Women in Third World Countries" was simple: "You now know more than decision makers at the UN, the World Bank and national leaders. What would you do to solve the problems faced by women?" Until women have equal social, economic, political, economic power, there will be sex-discrimination, and that includes treating women athletes as second-class, and includes the possibility that I will be raped

Few people will face experiences like these. Yet, they profoundly affected the lives of these activists and the courses they later endeavored.

## **Emotional Reaction**

Next, I looked at the importance of emotions in determining what created the desire to get involved in advocacy and social change. It seemed to me that a strong emotional connection or reaction must be involved. Newspapers and other various media are full of events such as listed in the atypical experiences like automobile accidents and rapes, such as the ones previously relayed by Mary Hums and Nancy Hogshead-Maker, respectively. These may evoke a surge of pity or momentary feelings of outrage, but without a strong emotional connection, they seem unlikely to encourage anyone to take action against a social injustice.

Others also expressed strong emotional reactions that spurred their action. Pat Griffin, for example, used negative emotions, namely rage and indignation, and changed them into a motivation to fight for the cause of LGBT individuals. She relayed:

I remember in the mid 70's when there was a lot of potential to gay rights more broadly in the country and there was a singer named Anita Bryant who was very popular and very out spoken against gay people having non-discrimination rights and so on and I can remember that was a real spur for me it really made me want to be more active in doing something to ensure that lesbians and gay men would have more rights and in particularly in sports because that was my area

Tyler Spencer was spurred to action by the confusion and suffering of a friend who in turn had been influenced by the confusion and desperation of his ex-girlfriend.

...his ex-girlfriend became HIV positive which was a very powerful experience because she told on the news that she was suicidal and she didn't know where to

turn and she felt like she couldn't talk to her family or anyone else and that her life was going to be over because she didn't get actually did any sort of treatment.

In short, I identified increased awareness, atypical experience, and emotional reaction as influential factors to explore how activists got involved in social justice advocacy. The findings expand Moeschberger et al.'s (2006) model by adding two other factors, atypical experience and emotional reaction.

### **RQ3: Social Justice Activities**

Research question 3 focuses on what activities participants are engaged. In fact, history has shown how activists have engaged in social justice advocacy throughout the ages in many different manners. Some work as individuals while others work for an organization and still others found their own organization to battle social change and correct injustices. The actions they take can manifest in different ways. Activists may work to educate others, raise awareness, change negative attitudes and/or work to create legislation in order to enact the changes they wish to see occur. Also, they encourage others to get involved in social justice advocacy as well, a step that could be critical to the success or failure of their cause.

#### **Raising Awareness and Changing Attitudes**

Most of the participants have been trying to raise awareness of injustice and to change the prevalent attitudes of society on the issues they have felt to be unjust. Some, such as the professors in this study, have taught classes and given lectures on the issue in various settings, while other have turned to writing about the issues in printed and online forums. Mary Hums was one who recognized the importance of media in providing

inspirational role models in sports that could help enact social change. When asked about the ways she tries to raise awareness, Mary Hums noted:

One is of course, the media coverage of athletes for their athleticism, you know, the athletes' who are elite maybe they're in college, maybe they're college athletes, Olympics or Paralympic athletes who have disabilities, right? The stories we hear about their athleticism and the fact that they're great athletes and they should be role models because they are great athletes, okay.

She also mentioned that there is importance of how the media portrays the issue:

It's representing a person with the disability of someone to be pitied as opposed to someone who is meant to be admired for athletic ability. So, that's the kind of a discussion that we're currently trying to frame with conventional media outlets. The feel good stories are nice. But, but what methods are they portraying, as opposed to portraying an athlete with the disability as an athlete, first? So, those are okay, I could probably go on.

Taking advantage of the popularity of social media as a tool to reach the younger generations, Courtney Szto utilizes a blog and other online media to highlight issues. She noted:

Earlier this year, I created a social media site/account called Offside Plays. It is inspired by the Everydaysexism initiative that tries to expose the prevalent nature of sexism and harassment. It is mostly used to highlight instances of racism, sexism, homophobia and/or other forms of discrimination in sport, physical activity, and health but what I would like it to be is more of a story-sharing platform similar to Everydaysexism. The intent is to demonstrate that

discrimination in sport and exercise are not isolated incidents rather, they are systemic and patterned. Hopefully it could be used as a site of research for some as well.

Ellen Staurowsky had this to say about an ongoing project she is working on utilizing the government legislation as a tool to bring about change:

I still do a lot of work with Title IX and gender equity and I have one major project right now looking at women working in the college sport workplace beyond just coaches and athletic directors and looking at the full array of women in all of the different capacities who work in a college athletic department, from marketing to sponsorship to fundraising to sports information to athletic training to business officers to insurance people to administrative assistants, trying to get a measure of how their experience ... of what that collective experience is and whether or not we may see differences depending on what their roles are.

In brief, it is essential for an activist to find a way to raise public awareness about an injustice and to raise awareness and to change the attitudes of society. Whether it is via the media, online forums, classrooms or simply word of mouth, the activists took many actions to change people's attitudes and behaviors, seeking to create more just worlds.

### **Engaging in Activity**

All of the activists were eager to discuss their work and the actions they have taken to address a social problem. This could be considered an extension of their desire to raise awareness, as discussed above. Perhaps, for them, agreeing to the interviews was

another way for the activists participating in this study to spread the word about social problems and the actions they undertook to change the issue.

Mary Hums has worked towards having a universal design in sport. She articulated:

Universal design looked at making all spaces accessible to all people regardless of ability. So, it looks not only at physical space, but also signage, communication all sees that sport organizations have and also employee attitude. So, there's customer service element to universal design and when I say access to everyone. I don't just mean people with disability, I also mean someone who has a language differential or older or little kid. Someone who travels with a service dog or coming to the game with six children. You know how do you make a space accessible for everyone. We are just now starting to look at the concept of universal design in sport. It's been looked at in museum and airport, but it's new to the sport space.

She was not the only one to speak at length of her activity. Peter Roby, for instance, discussed his approach for encouraging diversity:

One of the things I think is unique about my approach to created athletics is I bring a social injustice perspective to the work. So whether it's around our core values...one of our core values is the appreciation of difference. So we try to create a culture where everybody feel safe and respected regardless of their differences with respect to ethnicity, gender, social economic background, sexual orientation, religion, or politics. I think we've been acknowledged for that work and some of the things that our students and our faculty and our staff have done.

He also shared comments about another issue he feels of great importance which he combats via a campaign to raise awareness:

I have agreed to serve as the Co-Chair of the White Ribbon Day Campaign here in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts again this year. It's the second day that I've done that. So the White Ribbon Day campaign is an initiative to engage men in the discussion and the solution around the violence against women. Where men are asked to take pledge to do all they can to not provoke, allow, or support any issues or efforts that would result in violence against women. So it'll be a year-long effort and one that will culminate with a large event at a statehouse with the governor and others. My goal this year is to galvanize this community here at North-Eastern, but also to engage any other players in the world of sport here in the Commonwealth to join me in raising our voice on behalf of eliminating that violence against women.

Eli Wolff also shared some of his work. He spoke about the importance of engaging in new ways to build coalitions:

You know I'm working all the time in like different coalition building initiatives, and kind of like that process of working with different people and kind of figuring it out together the team, so a lot of the parallels at sports, you can kind of apply to activism and social justice. You know, that's one thing that I quote that I wrote with Peter Kaufman about playing and protesting. It's kind of interesting to think about the parallels.

Eli Wolff states he works all the time towards his goal and that is a sense I got from all of the activists that were interviewed. Their work was not merely a weekend activity. It was

something that they incorporated into their everyday life and work. Similar to Mahatma Gandhi's often cited quote—"be the change you wish to see in the world"—these activists seemed to have become the change they wished to make. They work hard to bring about those changes through a variety of means that goes beyond simply raising awareness in others. However, raising awareness and engaging in activity to stimulate social change were but two of the three factors identified in this study. The third, encouraging others, is equally important.

### **Encouraging Others**

Many participants engaged in social justice activism by addressing the issues and encouraging others to get involved fighting against injustices. In fact, almost all of the participants indicated that they encourage others to get involved in their activism and start a new project to change social problems. Eli Wolff commented that he actively tries to come up with ways to motivate the younger generations to participate:

So, I think, for me I've also been getting more interested in like innovation and (you know), new kind of advocacy innovation projects. So you know, part of my interest, longer term how young people and sort of incubate their ideas and kind of like that next generation of advocates and activists

Spencer Wood relies on having a common ground with his target audience in order to get them to better understand the issues and encourage them to get involved in change:

Since I have an athletic background here at the university, it's easier for me to relate to these men that are having practice every day and lifts.... So it's very easy for me to understand the time of life that they are in and what's important to them. So for that reason I think I am really able to communicate with them on an



effective level and allow them to understand this is actually a very important, not only subject but a place of life that we as men need to step up to the plate and try to educate and actively get involved in the fight against relationship violence and violence in general. How I encourage others, especially most men, especially college athletes I'm willing to bet that there's not too many Texas A&M football players that walk around and are wondering if there's enough lighting for them to walk around and wonder if there's enough light for them to walk to their dorms. I try to get men involved from a perspective that they can understand

Peter Roby offers the following insights into his advocacy. Working with an advocacy group has enabled him to reach out to and cooperate with other groups around the nation in order to reach as large a percentage of the population as possible:

Working in that space to try to protect and educate and support the victims and/or the public around the need to continue to support the work and do all we can collectively to eliminate it. So working with Jane Doe Inc., which is the advocacy group here in Massachusetts that helps support coalition for domestic violence in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, we have organizations on campus. One of which is 'Vision', which is there to raise the awareness around violence prevention ND support... so I've collaborated with number of organizations over many years to do things here on campus to raise awareness and engage people in a dialogue. I'll continue to do that so that it's coordinated. I think in that way it's much more effective.

Other activists also spoke of how they encouraged others to be involved. Ellen Staurowsky, for instance, focuses on students and showing them how they can be more

active. She seeks to “kind of lead them down a path where they can feel like they’re difference-makers. So that’s largely how I try to do that. I am always very open to students approaching me.” Blake Skjellerup also works with young people, seeking to empower them to be more involved. He encourages “others to be involved with making the world a safer and more positive place for LGBT teens to grow up in. By using my voice and actions, I encourage others to be proud and positive in who they are, and to let that be the message.

Perhaps that quote by Ellen Staurowsky in which she states she encourages others so they “feel like they’re difference-makers” is the unifying goal of all the participants. Encouraging others to make a difference and then seeing the difference that is being made is the manner in which successful movements gain momentum and are able to gather more like-minded people who in turn will work towards change. As more people become aware of injustice, take actions to raise awareness among others, and advocate for social change, the greater the chance of more just institutions.

#### **RQ4: Personality and Social Justice Advocacy**

Research question 4 focuses on how activists' personalities play a role in their activism. In order to effectively answer this question, I draw from the big five personalities. I had initially drawn from the Big Five framework to capture the personality traits. However, some of the participants’ responses fall outside these strictures, and so as a way of capturing their perspectives and voices, I include additional information here.

## Personality

**Extraversion.** One aspect that was present in the majority of the participants was Extraversion. Extraversion here refers to talkativeness, passion, friendliness, gregariousness, assertiveness, and cheerfulness. They had the following things to say about themselves:

Blake Skjellerup: I think one part that my personality has had to play in being involved with social advocacy is that I am confident in who I am. In order for people to be responsive and open to your message, being true and honest in who you are, and being confident and happy in who you are, allow for the positive and true message to shine through.

Spencer Wood: You know my personality is I will speak up. I am not going to take the backseat through a situation and just be happy that I am not the one involved in it or whatever it may be.

Nancy Hogshead-Maker: I'm an extrovert, and not interested in "the drapes" conversations. You know, how you picked out the drapes, how they were made, how they go with the furniture, the foibles when they were installed... eye-roll. When people know me, they know about my work and what is going on with women in sports. My social and professional circles are very close; even my husband is endlessly fascinated with my work. I'm also very social – I really like the people I collaborate with.

Peter Roby: I'm not afraid to speak my mind. I'm passionate. I think that I'm able to utilize that passion along with my knowledge of the issues and my reputation and my network of people in the industry, to engage them in the right kind of conversations and to get them involved.

Collectively, the activists spoke about key elements of extraversion, including the willingness and ability to engage others, speak confidently, and be comfortable in social settings.

**Empathetic.** Another aspect that appeared in several cases, such as Pat Griffin, Nancy Hogshead-Maker, and Richard Lapchick was Empathetic. Here, they express compassion toward others, but also seek to understand their experiences from the perceivers point of view.

Richard Lapchick, for example, sought listen to others before expressing his own views. He noted: "If I'm in a crowd of people I like to learn from them and listen to them and not talk very much myself unless you know, I know that there's something I really should contribute, but so I know that I have to be expressive and communicate my ideas."

Pat Griffin also spoke of listening to others. She indicated that a key part of creating change climates was to *hear* what others had to say and offer them voice. She relayed the following: "I believe that if you expect people to change, change their views, change their prejudices, you have to treat them with respect in the process of inviting them to do that."

**Conscientiousness.** A third personality trait that was identified in many of the participants was Conscientiousness. By this I mean that they demonstrate a strong sense

of duty and moral responsibility. This feeling seems to motivate them towards continuing their work in the face of obstacles.

Eli Wolff: This is about trying to do, I mean, I don't think any of us could try that. We're just trying to do work. I mean, it's not to say it's not impressive. It's kind of cool to look back on, but I think the intent of the work is to try to fill gaps and create breakthroughs.

Mary Hums: I would like to perceive myself as someone who sees injustice and try to do something about it and when it comes to disability, you know? I think that's always, I often say things to my students: "How do you change the world?" And you changed the world one at a time. You changed the world one door at a time and you changed the world one word at a time. And you know that. And I think I've done that all along. And that's of course, my perception of myself.

It was interesting to note that the character traits listed by the participants were all what would be considered positive by society. None of them mentioned negative character traits as part of their work towards social change. Nor did negative terms appear in what some might give positive connotations to such as 'rage against injustice,' 'avenging a wrong act' or a desire to see the oppressors suffer. Nor did anyone describe themselves as quiet or meek. Their responses about their personality listed positive and desirable traits suggesting that they are in fact more useful for an advocate than negative ones.

### **Summary of Findings**

In drawing from Moeschberger et al.'s model for awareness and engagement (Moeschberger et al., 2006), I was able to explore how activists learn about social injustices (RQ1), how activists got involved in social justice advocacy (RQ2), and what

activities they are working on (RQ3). Also, using the big-five personality model as a guide, I examined how activists' personalities play a role in their activism and found other factors shape one's engagement (RQ4). From an analysis of the interviews, I was able to identify five points of consideration to explain the psychological factors that are associated with one's social justice advocacy. When it comes to the definition of social justice, two themes emerged as a result. The first was the theme of a Social Conscience in which an activist had witnessed or perceived an injustice and felt the need to do something in order to rectify it. The other was the Champion of a Cause in which the activist stated he or she wished to provide a voice for those people who are unable to stand up and speak for themselves.

Next, it was determined that activists first encountered the injustice by direct experience, indirect experience, direct contact, or indirect contact, but we also determined that these are mutually exclusive. Some of the participants indicated that they had both types of experience. This could come about if the responder self-identified as a minority of some sort whether it be racial, gender, or sexual orientation, which would bring about direct experience, but who were also influenced by others who shared their experiences providing them with indirect contact as well.

Under increased awareness, I could identify three factors. These included increasing awareness in which the activist made a conscious effort to learn more about the perceived injustice and its background to gain a deeper understanding of its origins and effects. Atypical experience, in which something beyond the normal daily routine shook and made what awareness they already had about an injustice more acute or personal, was another factor. Finally, emotional reaction was also determined to be a

factor where it was determined that whatever experience or contact happened, whether direct or indirect, had to strike an emotional cord and led the activist to get involved.

In addition to understanding the issues, having the motivation to fight injustice and knowing how they as individuals can go about doing it, we looked at how they were engaged in the process of change. There were three factors here as well. The first was *raising awareness* in others meaning that the issue is brought to light via talking to others, publishing or other media sources with the ultimate goal of changing attitudes about the issue in order to get the public to shake off its complacency about an injustice. Next was *engaging in activity*, a topic that all the activists were eager to discuss as it provided them a chance to explain their work at length and fed into the first factor of raising awareness. Finally, the last factor was *encouraging others*, which involved motivating other people to take up the same cause and battle to eliminate the injustice.

In an attempt to learn what spurred activists to take an action, participants' personality was examined. Participants were whether they believed that their character played a role in their activism. Their responses revealed three personality types *Extraversion, Empathy, and Consciousness*. I drew these from the big five personality types, but changed Agreeableness to Empathy as it seemed a better term. Agreeableness seems to imply the need or desire to avoid conflict or risk however empathy is closer to the meaning demonstrated by the activists. They are able to know how a victim of injustice feels and they desire to change the world for the better because of it. Those activists who describe themselves feeling a strong duty or social responsibility were placed in the category of consciousness while many of the respondents claimed that they

had a gregarious, extroverted nature that would not allow them to keep quiet in the face of injustice.



## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The primary purpose of this study was to (a) examine the factors that can be associated with social justice advocacy in the context of sport, (b) describe the psychological processes associated with individuals' interest in social justice activism, and (c) investigate the relationship between social justice advocacy and personality. In this chapter, I describe the summary of the findings and provide possible contributions, practical implications, limitations to this study, and future research.

As a key first step of the study, I asked the participants to provide me with their thoughts on the meaning social justice activity. Using their narratives, I was then able to develop a definition of the term based on the participants' own words. Thus, I was able to say that social justice advocacy can be defined as “advocating for *people without power or voice, while also cognizing a sense of responsibility to combat the problems and injustices of society.*”

Following that, I asked a question to the social justice activists about how they had learned about the issue with, which they are involved. As I described in the chapter 4, I found that there were two different experiences, direct and indirect experiences. Most of the participants indicated that they were influenced by events directly or/and indirectly experienced themselves, but also were impacted by the direct or indirect contact with injustice. This is an important step and it is crucial that we understand how awareness of a social injustice is discovered. The reason it is important is that to effectively combat social injustices found in sport, we need to be able to effectively make people aware of the problems. Interestingly, no participant mentioned that they read about an issue and

felt compelled to act. All of them were inspired to take action based upon either directly or indirectly experiencing the injustice or having a friend, relative, or co-worker who was either affected by the injustice or was in the field already working to remedy the social problem.

In addition, I found other factors that motivate the activists and what encouraged them to get involved in activity. The purpose of this question, as with the others, was to see what can be used to influence others to become involved in social justice advocacy. By understanding the influential factors, we can utilize them to encourage others to shake off apathy about injustice and to take up a cause that will help those who are not treated equally. Three factors were identified, including increased awareness, atypical experience, and emotional responses. Importantly, I found two factors that expand Moeschberger et al's (2006) conceptual framework.

Next, when examining the results for the next question, I found what kind of activities the participants were involved in and how they became engaged in those activities. I identified three factors to answer this question, including raising awareness and changing attitude, engaging in activity, and encouraging others. Although these three major factors were identified, activities they are engaged in were quite varied. I had interviewed 11 activists from various fields in sport. Not all of them had the same field of interest when it came down to a social justice advocacy. Their areas of interests include ability, gender, social class, race, and sexual orientation issues. The work they were involved in was clearly influenced by their experience, either direct or indirect as the work they chose to do in advocacy was based on their experiences becoming aware of the issues. This is consistent with Moeschberger et al's model for awareness and engagement

(Moeschberger et al., 2006). For example, Mary Hums saw her friend injured and confined to a wheelchair and the issues that friend was now facing, leading up to Mary Hums wanting to become involved in ability-based social justice. It was also discovered that an advocate did not need to be involved in just a single issue. Subsequent experiences could cause an activist to take up a new cause. For example, one activist took up the cause of the LGBT community in sport. However, while working as a coach for a woman's team, she became more aware of the inequality between male and female athletics, especially in funding for college teams. Thus she became an activist for that issue as well.

Finally, the next question I asked the participants pertained to their personalities. Many people have direct or indirect experience with injustice, but do not become activists. Thus, I wondered if one's personality played a role in deciding if one would become involved in social justice activities. I found that consistent with other studies, one's character has a positive impact on activism. Omoto, Snyder, and Hackett (2010) explored this as well and showed that one's personality was a strong predictor of AIDS activism and engagement. In this study, all of the participants identified themselves with personality traits that could be described as positive and desirable using such words as outspoken, cheerful, hard to intimidate, and passionate. None of the participants described themselves as shy or quiet, nor did they mention that anger was a motivating factor, regardless of the tragedies or hardships they may have experienced leading up to activism or after becoming involved in activism. Even threats to the physical well-being and livelihoods did not stop the activists from continuing with their work. Although none

of them said so directly, I could feel the pride they felt in their works and could read between the lines to see the underlying sense of responsibility they all felt.

### **Contributions**

As I described above, I interviewed 11 activities from diverse fields in sport. Most of the research focusing on social justice activism concentrates on one specific issue or activists who are engaging in one specific injustice issue. However, in this study I interviewed activists from different fields, including former and current athletes and scholars. Those individuals have varied interests when it came to injustice issues and worked to improve inequalities in such areas as race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and social class. Therefore, this dissertation provides more generalized results. This option provides a wider application in that advocates working in various fields will be able to examine the more generalized approach here and utilize the results to find a method of inspiring others to become involved in activism. Also, despite the fact that all the participants interviewed were related to the field of sport, it can be extrapolated that the results found in this study can be applied to other fields as well due to the various types of works that the advocates examined were engaged in.

Moreover, I looked at activists' personalities and how they played a role in their activism. I theoretically draw from the big-five personality model and the awareness and engagement model. By adding a personality factors, I was able to find one's personality played a meaningful role in their activism and engagement. As discussed above, not everyone who has an experience that inspires some to become activists in social justice becomes interested in advocacy. The personality traits one exhibits play a role in determining if one will become involved in activism (Omoto, Snyder, & Hackett, 2010).

Knowledge of this could prove useful in helping advocates of a cause in identifying possible future leaders of activism enabling them to nurture the next generation of activists. This is also a significant contribution to the existing literature, as a few studies in the context of sport have combined awareness and engagement models with personality considerations from my understanding.

Also, while conducting this study, I became aware of the fact that there are numerous activists in the field of sport and sport management. Although I was not able to interview all of them, I could interview some of the most influential individuals in this field. Interviewing very active scholarly advocates in the field of sport management and former and current Olympic athletes can provide a better understanding of social justice advocacy within the sport field. Also, their engagement experience and activities can strengthen our field because it allows them to become role models. This can encourage many sport management scholars and students to pay more attention to social justice advocacy and the benefits of engaging in social change.

Therefore, I believe the contributions from this study can provide activists with the tools needed in encouraging activism in others and researchers with another, key piece of the puzzle as to why some individuals in sport become active in social justice advocacy.

### **Practical Implications**

The participants in this study have provided enlightening narratives regarding how they became involved in social justice activism. Their motivations for social justice advocacy and the factors that influenced them when they started out could be used to help motivate others to take a stand against injustice. Specifically, as the participants were all

related to the sport industry either as an athlete or as a researcher or educator, what has been learned from this study could be put to use in a drive to motivate others to become involved in social justice advocacy. The ultimate goal being to address inequalities and provide the same opportunities for people in sport regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, financial status, or other characters.

In the first research question, I was learned that direct and indirect experiences were important when the participants in the study first learned about a social injustice. This was followed up with information about factors that kept them motivated such as having an atypical experience and an emotional reaction. I would like to provide some suggestions in which those of us in a position of leadership in sport could employ in order to both raise awareness of a social injustice and to motivate others in our sphere of influence to combat it. By leadership, I do not just mean teacher or coach. Researchers have the potential to reach a great many people in the industry through their publications and athletes have an even wider influence because of their fans. This places them in a position of potential leadership when it comes to social change.

The experiences one encounters can be life-altering. In the study, some of the experiences directly encountered by the participants were quite negative, such as experiencing racial intolerance when they were young. However, they also were influenced by the hardships experienced by others. The latter could prove useful in making others more aware of social issues. Exposing students, athletes, or others within your sphere of influence to the impact injustices have to those who live them on a daily basis could provide them with the direct or indirect contact with injustice needed to motivate them to learn more about the issues and encourage them to become involved in

change. For example, one participant in this study revealed how he became involved in advocating about the problems faced by people who had contracted HIV by listening to a friend of a friend discuss her experiences and thoughts on the issue. Arranging for a classroom of students or a team to listen to such experiences would be relatively easy to arrange. Invited speakers could come and discuss their experiences to the class or, alternately, the team or class could be asked to do volunteer work in this area through a local organization. Meeting such people face to face and hearing their stories is a powerful tool. This would also help in raising the emotional response that was determined to be important in motivating future advocates. Simply reading the newspaper or watching a news broadcast on television would be unlikely to motivate one to take action. However, indirect experience that provides an emotional punch could prove useful.

### **Limitations**

Although this study answers the research questions it set out to do, there are some limitations that may have had an effect on the findings. I believe that in any study, the greater the sampled number, the better the results one would achieve. In this case, only 11 of a 35 potential participants agreed to take part in the interview section of the research. With the ratio of people agreeing to participate versus the number of people contacted being less than one in three, a greater amount of time than what was available would have been needed to get a larger pool of participants from which we could draw examples and experiences from.

Also, although all the participants in this study were related to sport in some aspect of their work, the issues they chose to advocate were all quite different. Future

researchers may wish to interview activists focusing on one issue such as racial equality or gender issues in order to have a more homogenous group. The answers provided about how they became aware of the social injustice in that area would then be more focused and practical applications could be adapted to suit that single issue.

Most of the interviews in this study were conducted via telephone with three being done solely by email. These two methods of gathering the narratives have the same limitation. They make it impossible for a researcher to see facial expressions and body language that could reveal additional, unintentional information that might provide further clues as to the participants' inner thoughts and feelings. Contact solely through email has the additional limitation of only being the written word. The emphasis on words and the inflection within a sentence, are lost as are additional sounds such as laughter or sighs which could also provide clues to how the speaker feels. Furthermore, in the case of email, the participant has a chance to edit themselves once they have written a sentence or passage in order. This could change what they say to merely what they want to project (Mann & Stewart, 2000).

In short, although this study has some limitations as I described above, these limits can open up future research avenues. In addition, I believe that finding the psychological and environmental factors that are associated with one's social justice advocacy can be of assistance to scholars who wish to better understand the topic of social justice and it provides for researchers and advocates alike.

### **Future Research Directions**

Given the findings from this study, there are a lot of future research avenues for researchers. As I mentioned above, I interviewed 11 activists from various fields in sport.



Thus, future a researcher can extend this study by interviewing more people from the fields of activism that I did not include such as religious beliefs and nationalism. I believe that interviewing more diverse activists would provide unexpected findings and it would also strengthen not only social justice literature, but also society.

In addition to interviewing more individuals, a participatory action research approach (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005) could also provide a more in-depth understanding of how people started and why people get involved in social justice advocacy. To be more specific, a researcher can collaborate with the well-known activists and actually get engaged in and spend time with them. By doing so, she or he can understand from their own perspectives and learn others more and more.

Moreover, if a researcher can take advantage of opportunities to conduct research with elite populations, they can employ the personal narrative inquiry (Rinehart, 2005). While I believe that the participants in this study were elite, I did not utilize the personal narrative inquiry approach. When employing this approach, researchers can document the experiences they encountered during their research. For example, a social activist may experience some negative and positive events while he gives some keynotes in public and he may also display some emotions that he or she did not disclose as experiencing during the interviews. By employing the personal narrative approach, a researcher would be able to observe and take note of these facts firsthand.

In addition, one avenue of future research could be to examine the links between social justice advocacy and the development of group consciousness. For example, it is possible that a sport organization or business can educate their employees and develop not only social consciousness, but also social responsibility. This could be achieved

through conducting a case study (Caza, 2000; Stevens & Slack, 1998). Indeed, the value of case studies is found in their ability to encourage insight, illustrate issues, and generate broad understanding (Stake, 2003). Therefore, conducting a case study to examine the links between social justice advocacy and the development of group consciousness could provide great contributions to the literature.

Next, in drawing from the awareness and engagement model (Moeschberger et al., 2006), I conducted qualitative research. Thus, it is also possible that future research use the quantitative research method to understand many other individuals' awareness of social injustice and engagement in activism. It is crucial to understand not only psychological factors that are associated with one's advocacy, but also there is a need to understand how to encourage many others to get engaged in social justice advocacy. Especially, surveys can be conducted to determine whether participants feel the urge to become engaged in social justice advocacy. Also, it can be a way to determine and rank in terms of importance which factors influence the participants most when they are considering engagement in social advocacy such as environment, atypical experience, emotional responses, or personality. Therefore, conducting quantitative research can extend this tremendously.

Taking all of these possible avenues of research into consideration, it is clear that this study opens up numerous possibilities for future work. Researchers in sport as well as other fields of study can draw upon this as the basis to begin their own studies of the factors that inspire and individual to become engaged in social justice advocacy.

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# APPENDIX A

## INFORMATION SHEET

### TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION PROGRAM INFORMATION SHEET

Project Title: Moving Toward Social Justice in Sport: A comprehensive study of social justice activists in sport and the factors that shape them

**You are invited to take part in a research study being conducted by Woojun Lee. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether or not to take part. If you decide you do not want to participate, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits you normally would have.**

#### **Why Is This Study Being Done?**

The purpose of this study is to examine why people get involved in social justice advocacy and understand psychological process associated with individuals' interested in and commitment to social justice

#### **Why Am I Being Asked To Be In This Study?**

You are being asked to be in this study because you are currently actively involved in social justice advocates.

#### **How Many People Will Be Asked To Be In This Study?**

20 people will be interview for this study.

#### **What Are the Alternatives to being in this study?**

##### ***If this is not a treatment study:***

The alternative to being in the study is to not participate in the study.

#### **What Will I Be Asked To Do In This Study?**

You will be asked to answer some questions regarding your social justice advocacy experience for about 10 to 20 minutes.

#### **Are There Any Risks To Me?**

The things that you will be doing are no more/greater than risks than you would come across in everyday life. Although the researchers have tried to avoid risks, you may feel that some questions/procedures that are asked of you will be stressful or upsetting. You do not have to answer anything you do not want to.

#### **Will There Be Any Costs To Me?**

Aside from your time, there are no costs for taking part in the study.

#### **Will I Be Paid To Be In This Study?**

You will not be paid for being in this study.

#### **Will Information From This Study Be Kept Private?**

The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only Woojun Lee will have access to the records.



**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION PROGRAM  
INFORMATION SHEET**

Information about you will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law. People who have access to your information include the Principal Investigator and research study personnel. Representatives of regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and entities such as the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program may access your records to make sure the study is being run correctly and that information is collected properly.

**Who may I Contact for More Information?**

You can call the Principal Investigator to tell him/her about a concern or complaint about this research study. The Principal Investigator George B. Cunningham, Ph.D at 979-458-8006 or [gbcunningham@hlkn.tamu.edu](mailto:gbcunningham@hlkn.tamu.edu). You may also contact Woojun Lee, M.S. can be called at 979-575-3760 or emailed at [woojun0901@hlkn.tamu.edu](mailto:woojun0901@hlkn.tamu.edu). For questions about your rights as a research participant; or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you may call the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program office at (979) 458-4067 or [irb@tamu.edu](mailto:irb@tamu.edu).

**What if I Change My Mind About Participating?**

This research is voluntary and you have the choice whether or not to be in this research study. You may decide to not begin or to stop participating at any time. If you choose not to be in this study or stop being in the study, there will be no effect on your student status, medical care, employment, evaluation, relationship with Texas A&M University, etc. By completing the survey, you are giving permission for the investigator to use your information for research purposes.

\_\_\_\_\_ I give my permission for audio recording to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not give my permission for audio recording to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

\_\_\_\_\_ I give my permission to have my names associated with the research.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not give my permission to have my names associated with the research, but I still participate in the study.

Thank you.

**Woojun Lee**



## APPENDIX B

### TELEPHONE SCRIPT

Hello, my name is Woojun Lee at Texas A&M University. I really appreciate your participation in this study. As I explained, this study is part of my dissertation and I am trying to understand the psychological factors that associated with your social justice activities and learn how you get involved in that issue. Your participation is protected by the IRB and your participation is voluntarily. If you do not like a question for any reason and you want to skip it, feel free to do so. The interview will take about 20 to 30 minutes. Also, with your permission, this interview will be recorded and transcribed. You may ask me any question at anytime during the interview. Are you ready?

### EMAIL SCRIPT

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Greetings, my name is Woojun Lee and I am a doctoral student at Texas A&M University. The reason why I am sending you this email is you are selected as potential participants who are actively engaged in social justice activism in the field of sport. This study is aimed at evaluating ‘why’ individuals are engaged in social justice advocacy, ‘how’ they get started promoting social change, and ‘what’ activities they are engaged in.

Participation is voluntary and no compensation available. If you would like to participate, please review the information sheet and then please respond to [woojun0901@hlkn.tamu.edu](mailto:woojun0901@hlkn.tamu.edu) for the further information and procedures.

Sincerely,  
Woojun Lee

## APPENDIX C

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### *Interview Greetings and Questions*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ ID \_\_\_\_\_ Type of injustice \_\_\_\_\_

Hello, my name is Woojun Lee at Texas A&M University. I really appreciate your participation in this study. As I explained, this study is part of my dissertation and I am trying to understand the psychological factors that associated with your social justice activities and learn how you get involved in that issue. Your participation is protected by the IRB and your participation is voluntarily. If you do not like a question for any reason and you want to skip it, feel free to do so. The interview will take about 10 minutes. Also, with your permission, this interview will be recorded and transcribed. You may ask me any question at anytime during the interview. Are you ready?

Before we start, what does social justice activism mean to you?

Okay here is my first question, how did you get involved in the activism? And how did you learn about the (injustice in your field of interest?) *Don't actually say it that way. Say "How did you learn about \_\_\_\_\_?" In the blank, fill in the persons interest. However, DO NOT ASK THIS QUESTION IF THEY ANSWERED IT IN YOUR FIRST QUESTION. Probably they will answer it right away with the first half of that question.*

Follow-up questions->

Member- checking>

So, what were your first steps that you took when you learn and experience "\_\_\_\_\_?"

What did you do after those first steps?

What positive or negative reactions did you encounter when you started the action?

Follow-up questions->

Member- checking>

Could you talk about your work on \_\_\_\_\_ in the past, present, and future?

Follow-up questions->

Member- checking>

Do you encourage others to get involved in the activity, too? How?

Follow-up questions->

Member- checking>

How might your personality play role in your activism?

Follow-up questions->

Member- checking>

#### Interview Procedure

- 1) Choose a setting with little distraction
- 2) Explain the purpose of the interview
- 3) Address terms of confidentiality
- 4) Explain the format of the interview
- 5) Indicate how long the interview usually takes
- 6) Tell them how to get in touch with you later if they want to
- 7) Ask them if they have any questions before you both get started with the interview
- 8) Don't count on your memory to recall their answers

## APPENDIX D

TABLE 1-PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Name	Profession	Gender	Race /ethnicity	Social Justice Advocacy
Richard Lapchick	Scholar and Author	M	White	Racial equality and a human rights
Mary Hums	Scholar advocate	F	White	Ability issues
Ellen Staurowsky	Scholar advocate	F	White	Gender equality and native American mascot issues
Peter Roby	Athletic Director and former athlete	M	Black	Racial equality issues
Pat Griffin	Former athlete and scholar advocate	F	White	LGBT and gender issues
Tyler Spencer	Student advocate	M	White	AIDS awareness
Eli Wolff	Former Paralympic athlete, scholar advocate	M	White	Ability issues
Nancy Hogshead-Makar	Former Olympic athlete and advocate	F	White	Gender equality issues
Spencer Wood	Former football player and student advocate	M	White	Violence against women
Blake Skjellerup	Former Olympic athlete from New Zealand	M	White	LGBT issues
Courtney Szto	Former athlete and student advocate	F	Asian	Race and gender equality issues